

THEOCRACY
OR
THE PRINCIPLES
OF
THE JEWISH RELIGION AND POLITY

ADAPTED TO
ALL NATIONS AND TIMES

BY
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ADVERTISEMENT.

IN the following treatise the Author does not attempt to give a full view of the Divine Government, either of the Jews or of the world. Such an attempt would be altogether presumptuous on his part. He only endeavours to bring out some great leading principles, which may serve to guide farther inquiries, and to indicate the *one foundation*, as he believes, of all true religion, just law, and righteous government. His object is to make it plain, that all things are, and ought to be, of God; and that all actions of men, in their social as well as individual capacities, should be ruled by his eternal laws, and performed with the express intention of advancing his honour. Being firmly persuaded that the world will come into this condition ere long, he humbly seeks, by this small contribution of his study, to direct the attention of his readers to what shall then be, and teach them to recognise in its beauty the simple completion of the working of those great elements which lie sparkling

before their eyes over the whole field of Revelation. He is fully convinced that the perfection of society in this world is to be reached by the full development and universal adoption of the essential Religion and Polity of God's ancient people.

ROTHESAY, March, 1848.

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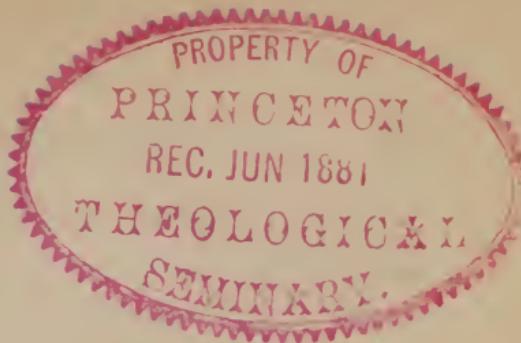
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THE
JEWISH RELIGION, &c.

By the Jewish people, we wish in this work to be understood to mean, the whole succession of generations proceeding from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, down to the time when the Canon of Scripture was finally closed. For all the communications of God in Scripture were made to, or recorded by, the descendants of the patriarchs, “to whom pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises ; whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God, blessed for ever.”

It is on this account, and for distinction’s sake, that we call the whole dispensation of religion Jewish, whether it has been usually denominated Patriarchal, Mosaic, or Christian ; since all these, as will afterwards be shown, are the same things

continued, and are, in point of fact, essentially one and the same religion.

The Polity of the Jews, in like manner, in so far as it was set up by Jehovah, their God, was nothing else than the application of the true religion, and the establishment of institutions fitted to embody and carry out the principles of that religion among them—was the legitimate operation of their religion in the form of Law and Government, or the actual infusion of it into all the private and public affairs of life, and into all the departments of human duty.

That Polity must, therefore, in some just view of it, be regarded both as supremely wise in itself, and as intended to be the accompaniment of true religion through all ages, and among all nations which receive and profess the true faith; since God, as the author of both, communicated them to the same people, superintended their administration, and demonstrated that they were to each other as cause and effect, as beginning and end, as faith and practice.

Not to view the subject in this light, would be to keep true religion and a divinely appointed polity for ever shut up to that people—would be to deprive the rest of the world of the benefit of a revelation from God, which, on such a supposition, could not have been intended for the Gentiles; and would necessitate the conclusion, that some of the largest and most important interests of men in this world were left entirely unprovided for and unregulated, by Him

who is the Sovereign Ruler and Judge of all the earth.

The divine revelation, from first to last, must be understood to be perfect, not only as proceeding from the all-perfect Being, but as making known and securing all the highest and best interests of men, to whom that revelation is given. And since Polity of nations embraces profoundest interests— involves great happiness or misery—exhibits on a wide scale the operation of manifold good or evil principles, and is not to be set up, in any measure of perfection, by a skill or wisdom less than that which knoweth the beginning and the end of all causes and events, it would seem certainly to require dictation from the same unerring wisdom which originates and ordains all things.

It is only what was to be desired and expected, that God's revelation should contain directions for the whole human species, in their whole individual and associated life. The conclusion that it will do so, seems forced upon the mind the instant that we speak of a divine revelation. That must surely be an unworthy idea of revelation which would confine the light from heaven to a mere portion of man's nature, or conduct, or history ; or which would restrict it to one department of his thoughts, or sentiments, or belief, or duty. This moral Sun which God has lighted up, must surely be intended by him to shed its beams throughout the whole sphere of our moral nature, relationships, and existence. If

it was not so intended, then we must either be gods to ourselves, fountains of our own light, framers of our own laws, authors of our own well-being, and masters of our own destiny ; or else be left to grope our way in utter darkness and uncertainty as to many matters which it most deeply concerns us to know.

In the face of an acknowledged revelation, such a supposition would represent religion, morality, law, and polity of nations, as things to be conceived of, changed, modelled, and provided for at men's ever-shifting pleasure ; and so would expose them to the contempt and scorn of all men, and especially of those who are wisest and best. It would represent the world as a perfect chaos of disorder, accident, and lawlessness; as under the guidance, moreover, of those very persons who constituted a part of that confusion which they set themselves to control and govern. There would, after all, be no unerring counsels to consult, and no almighty hand recognised as holding the reins and directing the course of things. There would be no fear, on the one hand, of any judgments most strictly universal and irresistible, to keep turbulence in awe; and no confidence inspired, on the other hand, that the righteous would receive a final vindication and reward. Divines, legislators, rulers, and judges, would be delivered up to their own ways, and would not be amenable at the tribunal of God, for what they might, as such, either do or teach.

Revelation, in other words, would be no revelation,—would possess no authority, impose no obligation, and be no rule of procedure or of judgment either to God or man. A supposition this which cannot for a moment be entertained by any one who would not more insult his Maker by acknowledging than by denying the revelation he has been pleased to give.

To show that the Scriptures, from their beginning to their close, contain what is intended by God for all men, of whatever class and office; that they are sufficient as a rule for man's whole moral life; that they bind the faith and obedience of all men; and that they direct and command statesmen, rulers, judges, and communities, no less than private individuals, is the object of the following treatise.

CHAPTER I.

RELIGION.

THE first of all things to man, as an intellectual and moral being, that, indeed, which comprehends all his interests, and is his supreme, his first and last law, is RELIGION. If he stands rightly in relation to this, all other good is secure to him ; if wrongly, every thing else becomes deranged, distorted, and even injurious. It claims, therefore, our first and chief attention.

SECTION I.

DISTINCTIONS AND DEFINITIONS.

Religion Objective—Its foundations—Subjective—True—False—Only one True—Natural—Revealed—These united.

When considered *objectively*, or as an object to be contemplated, Religion consists essentially in

those relations or bonds which God, the author of all being and relations of being, has established between himself and his intelligent creation, of which we form a part. It is the tie which binds us to him, as the Former of our bodies, the Father of our spirits, and the Being who gives us life, and breath, and all things.

As such, it has its foundations laid in the sovereign originating will of God, and is raised by his eternal counsel into a law; hence it is entirely independent of our knowledge or judgment, our acceptance or rejection. It is a positive, fixed reality, which cannot be changed or altered, unless it should please God to change or alter it—a supposition which his very perfection and supremacy absolutely forbid. It remains the same, whether we know it or not, and whether we willingly submit to it or not, even as God and creation remain the same.

In this its primary sense, and with reference to our faculties, it is purely objective—a thing to be known and received, and not a thing to be framed or done by us. It stands majestically, claiming our attention, our belief, and our submission; or rather, God has bound on us the duty of knowing and reverencing Him, and what he has done. It is God decreeing that we should know and love him, and all that he has made, and done, and constituted, up to the measure of the capacities which he has been pleased to bestow on man.

Religion, in this sense, is both constituted and

revealed by miracles : constituted by the will of God giving it existence, which is miraculous; and revealed by that miraculous existence, or by miraculous uses of what has existence already.

Religion, when considered *subjectively*, or as existing in us, consists in the harmony of our views, and sentiments, and conduct, with those relations and bonds, or with the will and law of God. He is a religious man, whose principles of thought, feeling, and action, correspond with what is objectively presented to his mind, as God and the will of God are presented.

Hence it follows that *True* religion, or the real relationships which God has established between himself and us, is entirely free from all mere opinion or fancy of ours, and is as fixed and determinate as God and his will are. It does not adapt itself to our conceits or desires, but demands the complete adaptation of our whole nature and life to its supreme and unbending claims. When we are thus in perfect union and subjection to it, we are of the true religion, and are truly religious ; for then the *object* of religion fills and blesses us, the *subjects* of it placing us in harmony with God, with his will and providence, and with all that is good and happy.

A *False* religion, on the other hand, is what has no positive ground or existence in the constitution of the universe of truth, whatever it may have in man's imaginations. It is that which is at variance

with all just law, and all undepraved being ; and consequently, it is what must be abhorrent to Him who is the fountain, the centre, the end, and the judge of all truth ; and who, in reality, and giving all just expressions to his hatred, hates every false, as well as every wicked way.

It follows, therefore, that, whether we know it or not, there can only be *one* true religion, whether in its objective or subjective character ; and that no other can be pleasing to the God of truth, or binding on the faith or consciences of men.

It follows, also, that no false religion can have the moral effects or the fixed rewards of the true ; and that it is the first and highest duty of man to seek, by all accessible means, to distinguish and choose the truth as it exists in the mind of God, and proceeds from his sovereign will.

In like manner, it must be concluded, that to *err* either in choosing or encouraging a religion that is false, is an evil or a crime against which every man ought to guard with the most jealous and scrupulous care.

What is called Natural Religion, or those relations which God at first established between himself and man, together with man's conformity to the will of God in them, embraces and reveals only what arose with creation, and out of its constitution and direct operations. It is, therefore, what would have remained sole and complete, had not man transgressed the law of his Maker, and sought to break

up his blessed relationships with Him. It is not complete nor sufficient since the fall, simply because it cannot restore the harmony which was then broken, nor make the guilty innocent, nor turn ignorance, or terror, or hatred of God, into light and love again.

Revealed Religion is that which comes from God, not through Nature, but through the Scriptures, and that with such evidence of its origin and authority as creation itself brings with it; or with so much clearness on the face of it, as to render the man who rejects or does not appreciate it as inexcusable as he is who beholds the creation, and does not see in it the being and the glory of its Creator. Such a revelation we have in the Holy Scriptures, which are as manifestly of God as is the heaven above us, or the earth on which we tread, or our own frames, so fearfully and wonderfully made.

It is from Revealed Religion we learn that by the first man's disobedience some of his best relations to God were cut off, and the position in which he was fixed by God was changed, against God's will and published law, so that his harmony with his Maker was made to cease. Man obeyed not, loved not; and God approved not, delighted not as before. Sin, the creature of the creature, a monster in the creation, appeared, bringing with it an awful havoc of all that was by God pronounced to be good, and designed by him for happiness. A new relationship—a relationship of opposition, incongruity, and rebellion—was thus introduced into the universe against

its original constitution, and against the law of God; so that natural religion lay dismembered and prostrate in man's soul, inspiring only towards the Supreme, sentiments of terror, aversion, and a wish to forget; while God, through nature itself, through the things he had made and always controls, gave unequivocal and dreadful tokens of his deep displeasure, by the introduction of the universal law of disease and death.

Hence, if lost man is to be restored and saved from utter and eternal ruin, the fruit of his impiety, he must be so by a provision of a very special, or rather of an original kind; by something springing new from the bosom and will of God himself, who is the only fountain of all that is good and true. Fallen man could never give birth to any thing that could save him; just because he cannot create what is right and true. In other words, God must institute a new relation, by which he may at once remove that which man had formed, and fill up the chasm of distance that now exists between himself and his sinning creature.

Accordingly, he provides and appoints his own Son as mediator between himself and sinners—constituting him a great centre of relations between himself offended, and man offending, “gathering together in Him all things which are in heaven and which are on earth.” Christ, at once his Son and also the Son of man, is thus both a being and a relation, emanating from him, binding sinners anew to God,

restoring harmony where there was discord ; and bringing order out of confusion, love out of aversion, and reconciliation out of wrath.

It is on this account that true religion *now* involves the great truth or idea of a Redeemer and Redemption, of a Mediator and of Mediation, of the substitution of God's incarnate Son for Adam, and of as legal, real, and intimate a connection of the redeemed with the Redeemer, in whom they rise, as of the fallen with Adam, in whom they fell.

Hence, if nature is, or may be, taken to mean all that of which God is the author, all that which moves in accordance with the will and good pleasure of the Almighty, Christ and his whole work have been, by the Author of all things, introduced into the glorious system of his framing ; and therefore, for men to leave him out of their account is as guilty and vicious a thing as to attempt to free themselves from the influence and control of a stable law of nature—is as foolish a thing as to try to explain or to enjoy the universe without regarding the sun, or the vital air, or some primary and essential principle of all created things. Christ and his redemption, indeed, are corrections of evils that have arisen in nature—that is, of sin and misery ; but they are corrections which have proceeded from the same will and power which gave birth to nature. They are set in their places, and have their grand uses assigned to them among the things that are, by the same sovereign hand ; and are a law he has fixed, no

less binding than are the other laws he has enacted and promulgated to men as moral and accountable creatures.

SECTION II.

FORMS OF RELIGION.

Their nature and uses—They may change, while the substance remains.

True Religion may be, and has been, invested with a variety of Expressions and Forms, which, though none of them are essential to its nature, are yet necessary to its being made known to creatures, however exalted in intelligence; since they are not capable of perceiving, as by intuition, the ideas and volition of God. It requires forms and expressions in coming from God to us. Its revelation is, and must be, made by sensible things, to our minds, which inhabit bodily frames, and hold intercourse with what is without us through bodily senses. These expressions and forms, however, must not be confounded with the essence itself, much less be exalted into or above what is the great reality. They are only as the dress is to the man, or speech to the thought, or as God's works are to God himself.

As *objective* religion must thus have form, in order to be known by us; so also must *subjective* religion, or those emotions and exercises to which true religion gives rise in us, express itself both by sensible acts, and by all that constitutes holy and religious character. True religion in us is the spring and law of all worship and obedience, and puts on the forms which the Author of it prescribes and requires.

These Forms, when appropriate and just, as they necessarily are when devised and enjoined by God, are neither more nor less than *adaptations*, on the one hand, of religious truth and law to our perception; and on the other hand, of our religious principles and feelings to the proper service of God, as well as to their own continuance and perfection. They may, therefore, change, and they do change, according to the changing circumstances in which God is pleased to place the true religion before our minds, and our minds before the true religion.

Hence the *history* of the truth, or of the true religion, is only the history of its unfoldings and applications to its purposes, and not of any essential or elemental changes in its nature and character.

SECTION III.

PRINCIPLES UNCHANGEABLE.

No essential changes in Religion, Proved—1. From the nature of God—2. From the necessities of Man—Miracles—3. From the testimony of Scripture.

That there can be no essential change in what is all divine, or in what proceeds from the divine will at any time, would seem to be capable of the most complete and satisfactory proof,

1. *From the nature of God himself.*—Every one will admit that God is absolutely perfect; and, therefore, it must also be admitted, that all he says and does will both manifest and confirm that perfection. There will be nothing said or done by him that is inconsistent with himself, or with any communication he has made, or may yet make, to his creatures. All that proceeds from him, however it may at first sight appear, will bear ineffaceable impressions of his perfect character. His work, whatever it is, will be absolutely perfect in its kind, and perfectly adapted to the purpose for which it was intended. It will cast no imputation either on him or on anything he has ever done. One part will throw light on every other; and no part will

ever disparage, or set aside, or abolish another. God will annihilate no truth—will change no principle—will abrogate no law—will undo nothing he has ever done, nor unsay anything he has ever said. And all this because he is perfect—is subject to no caprice—sees without interruption along the whole line of eternity—can have no additions made to his knowledge—can have no reasons for change of mind; and, possessing omnipotence, can be under no control of aught around him, but give effect to his whole will and counsel. In other words, by reason of the perfection of his nature, he is “without variableness or shadow of turning;” “the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.”

From this it necessarily follows, that God’s *first* acts and communications must not only be in harmony with all that shall everafter follow, but must also be germs, specimens, and models in their kind, according to which he will conform all his future proceedings; and these, again, being but developments, enlargements, and completions, of what he introduced at the beginning, will be as the first water from an opened spring, not only revealing the existence of the fountain, but making known, also, what sort of waters will flow from it ever after. Thus, if he speak a truth to Adam, it will be, and remain a truth, and in harmony with all other truths, for ever. Or, if he declare to Adam his love of anything, it must not only be lovely, but what he will love, for ever. Or, if he perform towards Adam an

act, it must be holy, and just, and good, and remain an instance of what is holy, and just, and good, for ever.

The same principle will hold in regard to the administration of law and government, or of providence, which is the same thing. The very first instance in this department must unfold and establish the rule which God, through all time, will observe, in that same department of his kingdom. His treatment, therefore, of the first case of obedience or of disobedience, on the part of man, must declare, and that in all its essential features, what his treatment of like cases shall ever afterwards be. It must be the permanent establishment, as well as the opening up and application, of *a principle of the divine government*—the registration and promulgation of an unchangeable law of his providence.

2. *From the necessities of man.*—This Unchangeableness of which we speak is necessary to man. To be brought into conformity to the will, that he may enjoy the favour, of God, is man's grand necessity; not, indeed, the necessity of his existence, but the necessity of his well-being. This is what revelation proposes to meet and to supply: “ My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

This need of man is the same in all ages, and in all nations—alike in the Patriarchs, in the Jews, and in the Gentiles; “ for all have sinned and come

short of the glory of God," and all are equally, as sinners, under the just condemnation of the Almighty. They all, therefore, need to be "washed, sanctified, and justified," and to be saved from the same ruin, by the same God, who alone has the power to accomplish all this on their behalf. The common need necessitates also a common, that is, an unchangeable, salvation.

The Laws of Providence, in like manner, as shown in the inspired history, must be unchangeable, to answer the ends of revelation. Were they to change in any of their great principles, or modes of operation, then it would follow that providence would both be and seem to be, a mere succession of unconnected, inconsistent, changing acts, in which there was neither principle nor rule. No instruction could be gathered from the past, for the benefit of the future. It never could be known, from what God had done, what he would afterwards do. Examples could furnish no instruction, and would be of no use to guide or warn; and the history of God's deeds, in the Scriptures, recorded by the pen of inspiration, would have ceased entirely from being applicable to the affairs of the world, the moment that John wrote his Amen at the close of the divine Apocalypse.

It is thus obvious, that not only the perfections of God, but also the necessities of man, which it is the purpose of revelation to supply, require that his moral government of the world should proceed on

unalterable principles, and be regulated by unchangeable laws.

That this end might be fully answered, God has been graciously pleased to cause a full and most accurate history to be written of the true religion, and of the operation of the laws of his providence. This history embraces both religion and providence, in their relation to individuals of every class and of every condition of life, and to communities of large and small extent, in every variety of circumstances and character. It stretches over a sufficient length of time—from Adam to Christ—to note every sort of change that *can* happen in the succession of ages and generations—taking in the whole field of specimenary experiments of human nature, of the applications of true religion, of the dealings of Providence, and of the effect of laws kept or broken; and so teaches the world, to the end of time, to know God's ways as well as his will, and justly to regard the things “written aforetime as written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”

There is, therefore, as great a constancy in the world of Revelation as in the world of nature—all the movements in both being the accomplishment of the unchangeable will of God.

If it be objected that MIRACLES are inconsistent with the view we have just taken, that they are departures from the regular action of established law, and are therefore indications of change in the mind

of Him who gives law, and performs miracles, it is answered,

(1.) First of all, that miracles *have taken place*, and yet the regular laws do exist and operate, and this equally in the world of matter and in the Providence of God; and therefore the objection, if it has any force at all, strikes as much against the constancy of what is called nature, as against the constancy of Divine Revelation.

That miracles have taken place *in nature*, or in the visible creation, is most evident from what we see. It is not denied that one stratum has been added to, and super-imposed upon another, in this “terrestrial ball.” One race of living creatures has existed, and then become utterly extinct, and other races, on another surface, have arisen in their stead. There was evidently a period in the history of the earth, when there was no man upon it—and the beginning to exist of such a being, with all the laws that bind him, and that come into existence with him, must have been at first a miracle, and therefore must remain an unquestionable miracle for ever. That was not, and could not be, a thing that happened in the ordinary course of nature. It was at first a new, unprecedented thing, which once unquestionably began, and has never since been repeated. The very earth on which we tread, and man upon it, are two witnesses, therefore, to this great fact, and they constantly and unitedly repeat their unvarying testimony.

The ruins of former existences are scattered so widely, and are laid so deep in the earth, that their testimony can never be silenced, or become faint or equivocal; and past systems and orders of things, proclaim aloud and everywhere, that they were both ruined and superseded by a stupendous miracle. They show that *they were under regular laws* while they continued in being—just as regular laws bind and guide us, and the system of things to which we ourselves now belong.

(2.) But, further, *miracles do not annihilate or subvert the regular course of the divine actings.* They only serve to reveal the highest truths, to introduce and confirm laws, and to press the common and most necessary things on the attention and belief of men. Hence we find them abounding at or near the beginning and introduction of principles or laws. Are not the elements of the world, with their wonderful arrangements, themselves the monuments and records of the operation and influence of causes that, were they now to operate in the same way, and to the production anew of the self-same effects, of necessity would be regarded as miracles? And would it not be necessary, in order to furnish specimens of a like operation of the same causes from generation to generation, to abolish at every step the previous law, in order to re-introduce it?—in other words, to have an endless succession of first creations, and an endless series of introductions and abrogations of laws?

Thus far the most sceptical, no less than the Christian, must acknowledge miracles. For, both must see that those original and confessedly miraculous events at the beginning, were absolutely necessary to the very existence and force of those regular laws, by which the earth is now guided and controlled.

In like manner, the new national economy of the Hebrews at the first, and, after that, the introduction, in their grand and fully developed principles, of the religion and government of the Jews, by Christ and his apostles, to all nations, were both of them accompanied by miracles, that were most stupendous at the commencement, and that became less and less so, till they entirely ceased. Such miracles were clearly necessary, both to introduce and to set in regular motion the whole systems, with their laws, to which they respectively belonged. They were not opposed to, but were rather the springs, the announcements, and the permanent enforcements, of the systems themselves. They revealed the Deity and his will, without whose recognised connection with them, they never could have received the force of law over the human mind. But, having once served this essential end, they were no longer needed—they are not repeated, and therefore cannot be again witnessed. They are only *recorded*, in order that those who live in after times may receive the full proof and impression of them, without being perplexed and confounded by injurious disturbances of the constant law, through

the constant repetition of what would now set it aside.

Hence it is that God, the author of all miracles, has also recorded them. He has stereotyped them, in the one case, in the solid strata and rocks of this earth which men behold; and, in the other case, in the Volume of Inspiration which all men may read. They stand there bearing their testimony, that the things on which they are impressed were not always seen to be what now they are, but received their beginning amidst the awful and majestic, the unprecedented and unrepeated acts of Him “who alone doeth great wonders.”

By means of miracles, thus wrought and recorded, the whole system of truth, law, and government, passes, fully attested, out of the region of sense *into the region of faith*; and the same truths, thus accredited throughout all subsequent generations, instruct the myriads of individuals that enter into life in the midst of the regularity which miracles have established. The father tells these things to his son, and trains him up in the knowledge and belief of what he himself saw or learned in his youth. The same characters are thus formed from generation to generation out of the same materials, and the harmonious faith of men runs along the chords of those naturally tender affections which bind so sweetly parent and child, and teacher and taught. The extremes of society and of ages are thus united by the same grand instructions and experience. A perpetually-

speaking revelation descends, from the period in which it was first given, to form the minds, to direct the lives, and to receive the commendations of all to whom it comes. One generation praises God's "works to another, and declares his mighty acts." (Ps. cxlv. 4.) The Church of God, from first to last, is made, by this means, to be one and the same; and the God of salvation is recognised as "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

To demand *a continual repetition of miracles* for the establishment of faith is, as we have shown, to demand an impossibility, and what would even be destructive of faith. For what would be thought of the man who should insist on being forced to believe in a creation, by being allowed to see the creation take place before his eyes? or to believe that there ever were any awful convulsions of the earth, by being made a spectator of similar convulsions renewed in his own presence? Such a course, it is manifest, would involve at once the destruction of the world and of faith, since the world would, in that case, have to be incessantly reduced to nothing, in order that every man might behold it spring up before his own eyes; and all conviction of truth would have to rest, not on faith, but on sight. The sceptic, therefore, would, for his satisfaction as to the origin of man, for example, have to be at the origination of everything, when there could, in reality, be no such individual as he who insists on the demand. The whole frame would need to be dissolved, and society

to have an utter end. It is needless to say he cannot, and will not, obtain his most unreasonable, and even monstrous request.

Equally unreasonable and absurd would it be to make a similar demand in connection with the Christian religion, or with any portion of remarkable history. Could such a demand be gratified, it would inevitably destroy the faith which sought for such evidence, because the miracles would thus become a regular course of things, or cease to be miracles. They would not establish, but be ever superseding, law and faith, and laying the foundation of interminable requests for new evidences. In a word, there could be no such thing as faith, which is nothing more than satisfaction with evidence. And as without faith it is impossible to please either God or man, so also without it, it would be impossible for human society to exist. A child must, and does believe a father. One man must believe another, as well as expect to be believed by him. Subjects must believe that the law is the will of the lawgiver, and that punishment follows crime; and the lawgiver is entitled to insist on such a belief. Remove all such faith from men's hearts, and then the very bonds of human society are broken, the business of life must stand still.

That *law stands on miracles*, and *faith on law* thus enacted, may be illustrated and proved by reference to the instance of Jesus Christ. He himself is personally the greatest of miracles, none ever having been

before, none ever to be after like him—a God-man. All that he communicated was introduced and attested by miraculous acts. It is a law to the understanding, the affections, the will, the whole conduct of man, and it has all, if anything conceivable can have, the force of law over all to whom he and his truth are made known. It is wholly entitled to the obedience of faith, which is simply the yielding up of our whole nature to the truth as it is in Jesus. His miracles introduce his truth and love, which command faith; and faith is bound to receive and obey them. Both what he teaches and what he commands is law; and faith is the acting of our whole faculties on Him, and on all that proceeds from Him. Faith not only perceives all this, but also trusts to its constancy and unchangeableness. So essential is faith to all the purposes of our life, and so deeply laid in human nature are its foundations, that no power, but that which can destroy the whole order of the world, can eradicate it. An utter and absolute sceptic, who puts no faith in the creation, nor in his fellow-men around him, cannot be found. Even among professed Atheists there is great credulity. One believes that chance or fate made the universe, or that it was not made at all; and another, who laughs at the Gospel as a fiction, finds no difficulty in believing an enemy to that Gospel who will testify that no man sincerely believes in Christ.

The same principle is observable in nature's laws. These arise out of, and stand on, the miracles of

creation; and then the faith of men receives them, and rests on their permanency.

The Worker of the miracles, in either case, is the enactor of the law; and faith, or the obedience of the mind, standing on the firm ground of such law, looks up to Him who has given being to us, and birth to all these things, and sees GOD to be all in all.

By miracles, then, God does not interfere with regular laws, but only establishes them, and conducts miraculous events so as not to supersede or overthrow faith, but to place it on the firmest foundation.

And then it deserves to be noticed, that the miracles he works are not of a character different from his laws. The principle or source of both, the object contemplated by both, and the ends which they actually serve, are one and the same. These laws, besides, cannot be enacted, or sanctioned, without those miracles; and those miracles, again, cannot but give birth and vigour to these laws. They equally stand enrolled in the pages of inspiration—bound up with each other, to be known and read of all men. From the beginning in their rudiments, and now in their full developments, they are as fixed and stable, as bright and beneficent, as the heavens themselves in their silent harmonies, shedding their glorious influences on this lower world.

3. From the testimony and evidence of the Scriptures themselves.—The attribute of unchangeableness is one so necessary, and so dear to God, and which seems

so apt to be overlooked or denied by men, that the Scriptures are continually asserting it, and this not only with reference to God himself, personally considered, but also to his counsels, his actings, and his word. "I am the Lord; I change not." He is "without variableness or shadow of turning;" and "he will not alter the thing that has gone out of his mouth."

Thus, that truth which is law to faith, abides for ever both in the creation and in the revelation of God. Both are alike unchangeable, because he is so. This is declared in very striking language by the Psalmist, in the 119th Psalm, verses 89–91: "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven. Thy faithfulness unto all generations: thou hast established the earth, and it abideth. They continue this day according to thine ordinances; for all are thy servants." The attribute of unchangeableness belongs, therefore, to the revealed truth and will of God, as one of its essential excellencies, which it has from its transcendently glorious Author.

Since it seems, however, to be taken by many for granted, that great changes took place, both in the religion and polity of the Jews, during the progress of their history, and this by the will of God, and that, therefore, the declarations of the Scripture we have quoted must be understood in some very qualified sense, we shall inquire into the matter somewhat minutely, to show that no essential change of principle or law actually took place by divine autho-

rity, during the whole course of his transactions with that people; or, in other words, that the doctrines, morality, and government of God, as set forth in the whole range of Scripture, are substantially one and the same.

It may be necessary, for this purpose, in the first place, to notice what those things are which have led into so many mistakes on this head, and to remove them out of the way. And,

I. It ought to be well observed, that the *progress of a truth or principle* towards its full manifestation, is not a change in the truth or principle itself. If there be a change at all, it is rather in the view of those to whom it is presented, than in the thing itself. It may seem less or more enduring—it may stand in a dimmer or clearer light—it may be placed in a variety of relations to other things which it may affect, or by which it is affected—the knowledge of it may be less or more widely spread—it may have less or more emphasis given to it; and yet, after all, remain the very same unchanged and unchangeable thing. Circumstances like these are found to belong even to the Unchangeable himself. He is, and was, and shall be ever the same; yet is he not always seen alike by all, nor has he always the same creatures around him. There was an eternity during which there was no creature. His wisdom and power may now create an insect, and, in a short time after, a human soul. His justice may to-day in-

flict death on a single individual, and to-morrow overthrow nearly the whole race of men by the flood. His goodness may, at one time, awaken pleasing sensations in a brute animal; and, at another, cause whole hosts of angelic creatures to sing with joy at the sight of a repenting sinner; and yet his wisdom and power, his justice and goodness, remain for ever the same.

Let this observation be applied to the oracles of God, and it will be clearly seen, that all those things that, at the close, were set on high in transcendent light and influence, arose out of small and dim beginnings, and gradually increased in glory as they ascended to the fixed height where they now shine. Take, for example, the imputation of righteousness, or favour shown to the guilty through a Mediator—or God's dealing with men, not only as individuals, but also as a race—or the doctrine of his providence—or the fact of the first generations of men having had their attention directed to future things, and those of later generations both to the past and to the future—or the fact of Christ and his apostles continually drawing from the doctrines, histories, and prophecies of the Old Testament their proofs and illustrations of what they taught, and of the treatment which both their doctrine and themselves should receive. They taught, as they themselves declared, “none other things than Moses in the Law, and the Prophets, did write.” The gospel, indeed, is said to bring life and immortality to light; but this it did not out of their *hiding-places*, where they lay utterly

unknown, but out of that *obscurity* wherein they were seen but darkly, and as through a glass, till Christ poured the light of his doctrine and personal resurrection upon them.

II. In the second place, that *additional revelations* are not to be regarded as among changes of principles. The world of truth was no more brought forth into the view of creatures in an instant of time, than all the parts of the universe itself sprang into being in a moment. Truth following truth, and principle following principle, no more alter the nature of what goes before, than the creation of man on the sixth day altered what was called into existence on the previous days. The revelation of the justice of God in punishing man's sin with death, does not at all interfere with the goodness and wisdom displayed in creating and nobly endowing man, who was made in the image of God. Nor does the redemption by Christ in any way set aside law or justice, which had taken their places in revelation before Christ came to magnify the one and satisfy the other. The introduction of the most glorious love of God, in Christ saving sinners, does not in the least degree diminish the original enormity of sin, nor set aside that great law that the soul that sinneth shall die. His reign of grace does not subvert his reign of righteousness, but "grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life."

It is one of the surpassing excellencies of the gospel, that it gives a firmer establishment and a higher emphasis to all the principles of divine law and government that had been previously introduced.

Besides, whatever additions were made from time to time during the course of revelation, are seen to spring from, and be perfectly consistent with, the very earliest and primordial truths. The ten commandments, for example, all arise out of the law of love to God, and the whole gospel out of the doctrine contained in the first promise made to Adam. They are, therefore, additions made in the same kind; or, rather, are only the unfoldings of themselves out of their first living seeds. So that the gospel, with its morality in the New Testament, is but the fulness and perfection of the same gospel and morality in the Old.

III. That the *fulfilment of a prophecy*, the *performance of a promise*, the *application of a truth*, or the *accomplishment of a purpose*, are not changes of truths or laws themselves, but are merely the perfectings and ratifications of them; and hence Christ declares, that he came “not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil them.” It was foretold by Moses, that a prophet would the Lord their God raise up unto his people, like unto him, whom they should hear in all things whatsoever he should declare unto them. Christ, therefore, does not dis honour or degrade Moses, but, on the contrary,

exalts and completes his divine commission. Hence, Christ says to the Jews: "If ye believed Moses ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me;" and, again: "One jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled."

IV. That *change of forms* is no change of principles. Whatever spiritual thing comes from God to men, must, from the necessities of man's nature, be, as it were, wrapt up and conveyed in some form or instrument of communication; since, without a constant miracle, the mind of man cannot, as by intuition or by pure abstraction, see heavenly truth as God sees it—that is, cannot behold it in its simple essence. It must find its way to us in words, or similitudes, or events, or institutions. This incorporeal thing, spiritual truth, like the human soul, must put on outward garments, in order to appear appropriately to souls that are themselves clothed with flesh, and can only reveal themselves through that flesh to other souls in like condition. Truth may, for a season, wear one form, then lay it aside and put on another, and yet be itself the very same unchanged and unchangeable thing. Thus, atonement for sin may, at one time, be presented under the aspect of a typical Lamb, slain for a guilty individual deserving death; and, at another time, under the form of Jesus of Nazareth dying on the cross, bearing the sins of many who deserved to die. Thus, again, the interest of a sinner in that atonement

may at one time be signified by the sensible act of his eating the flesh of a passover lamb with unleavened bread; and, at another, by his eating the supper of the Lord. Thus, also, the conversion of a sinner may at one time be shown by the figure, or form, of an Israelite passing through the Red Sea; and, at another time, by his being washed with the water of Christ's baptism. Then, in like manner, may the nature and blessedness of heaven be set forth for a season by the riches and rest, the peace and privileges, of the land of Canaan, and afterwards by a variety of other similitudes, or even by direct verbal descriptions; all of them divinely appointed, and, therefore, all of them divinely just and appropriate.

Nor, be it well observed, was the garb which divine truth and law wore in their earliest walks among men, destroyed after it was laid aside, and another put on. It is still preserved in the wardrobe of the divine records, to compare and contrast with that which the same truth and law now habitually wear, and shall continue to wear till Christ descend to transport his Church to heaven. That which was first can still make them visible, even to us who now see them otherwise and more perfectly arrayed; for we can still look at them in their first youthful appearances, and as they have grown up to their full maturity in Christ.

The better forms of things, under the Gospel, do not cast obloquy on those which went before, but

stand beside them to derive from them the benefit of their instruction and impressiveness. The ancient forms were, and are, patterns of things in the heavens, on which men can now look, and through which they can see the light of these heavenly things themselves. The benefit is great. It is no small advantage to be able, for instance, to contemplate the ark of the covenant in the light of Christ, and Christ again in the light of that ark; or to look at Abraham giving up his only son Isaac, in the light of God's not sparing his own Son, and then, God's not sparing his own Son, in the light of Abraham not having spared his.

It is true, Christ removes out of the practice of his Church the ritual and sacrificial forms, which in ancient times he directed Moses, his servant, to institute, and which he intended to be observed till his own coming. He does this, because in their very nature they pointed to what was still to come, and intimated their own immergence in what they foreshadowed. They themselves informed the observers, that they were but shadows of an approaching substance. For Christ to have retained them, after he had himself come, would therefore have been useless, unsuitable, and injurious. It would have been to let the scaffolding stand perpetually around the finished building, marring and concealing it—to confound the morning dawn with the noon-day—to set the Law in opposition to the Gospel—to make the image of the man confront and

divide the honour with the man himself—to maintain Moses, the servant, in a state of opposition to Christ, his master—a thing which the Judaizing teachers of Christianity most zealously attempted, and for which they were severely rebuked.

These ancient forms of which we speak, were appointed by Christ, not only for the reason already stated, but were expressly adapted to the state of the Church before his advent. Though Christ's benefits were not to be confined to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as a chosen, peculiar people, yet the gospel was to be confined within the bounds of that nation for a season, as God, for the highest and best ends, had determined; so that while they revealed the gospel they also confined it to the Jews. And why was it confined to them? For this reason, among others, that there might be opportunity for an inspired history of religion and law in their applications to a nation and people through a long succession of ages, in order that the records of God's providence towards them might instruct all succeeding generations; that the world at large might have a sufficiently extended and complete view and specimen of his government of nations, to whom he has made himself known; and that there might be an abundant store-house, out of which all generations might derive all that it was needful for them to know respecting the laws and ways of the universal, everlasting King. When these and such like ends are served—when the same truth, law, and govern-

ment, are brought fully out, and in this manner permanently set up—when all things are fulfilled, and their fulness is to be let forth to all the nations of the world, for which they were intended, and are now prepared—then Christ invests them with such forms of extreme simplicity, hardly needing to be even prescribed, as are universal, and adapted to every state of society, to every age and sex—every rank and condition; insomuch that, in the latter times, there is neither “Jew nor Greek, neither male nor female, neither bond nor free, but Christ is all in all,” and all are one in him.

The attentive reader of the New Testament can hardly fail to be struck with the little attention which is given to the forms of worship and of religious instruction. We can scarcely point to an instance, either in the way of injunction or of example, in this matter. The Spirit seems to have dictated the thing without deigning to notice the special shape in which it should appear, that, as light, it might then express itself in its own native form and movement. He seems to have foreseen what worship, in after times, would be given to mere forms, and thus rebukes the tendency, by giving no heed to what it would idolize, and to what, notwithstanding all this, it has actually adored. This simplicity belongs to the full age of revelation, to the perfect development, to the real refinement and purity of what is spiritual. It condemns the gross spirit of those who originate forms and ceremonies,

in order to make, as they arrogantly conclude, what is perfect more impressive.

V. That the *different dispensations*, as they are called, of religion, whether Adamic, Abrahamic, or Mosaic, whether Patriarchal, Jewish, or Christian, are manifestly nothing more than the same religion in its progress and degrees of revelation and application—are but steps in the glorious march of the same thing towards its maturity—are but the changing and enlarging of its robes, till it has reached its full stature, and assumed its permanent and fixed appearance. They are only such differences, therefore, as those observable between the outlines of a picture and its finished state, between the child and the full grown man, or between the dawning morn and the light of the completed noon.

These things being borne in mind, we may now carry our inquiries into the Scriptures themselves, to see whether the first grand principles of religion, law, and government, be not the same throughout, and whether they have undergone any changes in their progress, other than are merely apparent, to which we have just referred.

SECTION IV.

GRAND PRINCIPLES THE SAME.

The same throughout the whole Scripture—Character given to God in the Old and New Testaments—Character given to Man in both—Relations of Man to God—Immortality of Man—Sin—Salvation—Worship.

Religion unites God to man, and man to God. The proof of the sameness of religion, therefore, in the Old and the New Testaments, must chiefly depend on the view which each Testament gives of the nature, qualities, and character of God and of man. It were almost a waste of time to attempt to prove that both Testaments give precisely the same account of both these parties. It may, however, be of use to glance at the proof of this fundamental doctrine.

I. GOD is everywhere set forth as the only living and true God; as possessed of the same perfection and character, as the Creator, Preserver, and Ruler of all things. The New Testament does but confirm and illustrate all that is said of him in the Old. He is, in both, represented as an infinite Spirit, eternal and omnipotent—the source of all being, law, and

judgment—"the blessed and only Potentate," having the same moral attributes, entitled to the attention, worship, and service of all intelligent creatures—the beginning and end of all things—the maker and ruler of all, for his own glory, which is the end of all his works.

Moses, and the prophets, and Christ, all bear similar witness to him. Christ says of himself: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." He found fault with, he corrected no view of God that the Law or the Prophets had ever given; but, on the contrary, approved and confirmed all. He was himself "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person."

Those enemies of revelation, then, who have spoken of the character of the God of Israel, as less perfect and venerable than that of him of whom Christ spake, have only betrayed their prejudice or ignorance on this grand subject. They manifestly differ in this point from Christ himself. The severity which they would ascribe to the character of God, as he is represented in the Old Testament, is not greater than that which is manifested in Christ, whom he sent into the world to suffer and die for sinners—is not greater than Christ will show, when he shall awfully punish, in the end, the impenitent and unbelieving. The plagues which the God of the Hebrews brought on Pharaoh and the Egyptians, do not exceed in greatness and terror those which the New Testament denounces on mystical Babylon in the latter

days. And Christ's descriptions of the last day, and of the final judgment, are even more terrible than anything we read of respecting the divine vengeance in the Old Testament. All "the wicked shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power." Hear the Psalmist, in Ps. ix. 17: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God;" and Christ, "The wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment;" "their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." The appointed and commanded destruction of the Canaanites, by the armies of Israel, is not more awful than that which Christ pronounced and sent on the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Both are similarly terrible descriptions of the character and actings of the same God. In the one case, the Romans did the work of vengeance on the wicked Jews, which the Jews in a former age had executed on the Canaanites who occupied the same land. The same character of God is thus maintained throughout.

If, again, it be said, that the God of Moses descends to notice and legislate about trifles, our answer is, that God has condescended to create what they call by this contemptuous name; that it cannot be unworthy of him to care for what he has thought it right to make; that God sees and knows what men have frequently observed, namely, that the smallest and simplest things and events do not

seldom prove the commencements of what is confessedly great and most important; that a great principle or law is most easily taught and perceived, in what is so minute as to be easily subjected to the inspection of every one, and which, since it comes down to govern what is so small, must much more be regarded as governing that which is great; that the application of great principles to small as well as great, is necessary to the general movement and harmony of the world; and that the New Testament, no less than the Old, descends to the minutest things—as when, for example, it gives this command: “Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” Do the objectors not know, that that is greatest which comprehends not the great only, but what is great *and* small? and that whatever is great in the creation is made up of a multitude of things that are very small? Does not the law of gravitation control at once the vast planets that roll over the face of the heavens, and the smallest atoms that fly in the sunbeam? Is the law degraded by such an all-comprehending operation? How, then, can the law of Jehovah become insignificant by comprehending the universe, every thought and intent of the heart, and every action of the life of man?

We have said that religion consists in the relation which God, the fountain of being, has established between himself and his intelligent creatures, or in those bonds with which he has bound them to

himself. Now, these relations are, over the whole Scriptures, represented as the same. He is everywhere spoken of as the Creator, Benefactor, Lawgiver, Ruler, Redeemer, and Judge. It will surely not be disputed, that Christ and his apostles represented God in all these relations, just as Moses and the prophets had done before them; and that they grafted on them, as *they* did, all the sentiments and actions of subjective or practical religion. The Old Testament tells us that God created all things, and the New, that God created all things by Jesus Christ; and therefore both conclude, that all men, being the creatures of God and of his Son, are bound to hear and obey their Creator—that is, God and his anointed Son—individually of any other relation which may be established between him and them; the will of the Creator being manifestly binding as law on his creatures.

The Psalmist proclaims the glorious truth, that “the Lord is good unto all, and his tender mercies are over all his works;” and Christ declares, concerning the Father, that he “maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust:” the inference in both cases being this, that men should be thankful for his mercies, and imitate his benevolence.

Isaiah tells us, that “the Lord is our lawgiver;” (Isa. xxxiii. 22); and Christ teaches us to pray, “Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.” (Matt.

vi. 10.) We ought, therefore, to obey him as supreme.

The Psalmist assures us, that God “rules by his power for ever ; and his eyes behold the nations ;” and Christ ascribes the dominion to God, saying : “Thine is the kingdom and the power.” (Matt. vi. 13.) Hence, men universally should yield to God a willing and cheerful subjection.

Isaiah teaches us by prophecy, that the Messiah “was wounded for our transgressions, that he was bruised for our iniquities, that the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed ; that all we like sheep have gone astray, that we have turned every one to his own way, and that the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” (Isa. liii. 5, 6.) And Peter, writing of the same person, teaches us the same thing, when he says : “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness : by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray ; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.” (1 Pet. ii. 24, 25.) Hence, those that are redeemed are not their “own, but are bought with a price,” and are bound to “glorify God with their body and their spirit, which are God’s.”

Solomon assures us, that “God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.” (Eccles. xii. 14.) And Paul, addressing the Athenians, declares, that

“God hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.” (Acts xvii. 31.) We should, therefore, always act under God and his law, as those who have to render a final account to him; and as those whose eternal condition is to be determined by this supreme and most just Judge.

It is thus that the character of God, in all its essential attributes and working, is seen to be one and the same.

II. It needs no elaborate proof to establish the fact, that the Old and New Testaments give identically the same view of the origin, character, history, and destiny of MAN, and the same view of the relations in which he stands to God. They both teach that man was made in the image of God—that he was holy and happy—that he fell—that he is since altogether corrupt—is under condemnation as a sinner, cannot atone for his sins, or renew his nature, or gain the favour of God—that he may be saved by grace, renewed by the Spirit, and obtain eternal life in heaven—that he has all law and government, redemption and judgment, from God—that he is to love, obey, and enjoy God; and that as many as are restored, are restored by the grace of God, through the Mediator, Jesus Christ, who is “the second Adam, the Lord from heaven.”

III. Between God and man, the same RELATIONS are set forth in both Testaments, and under all dispensations, as existing, and as demanding from us the same reverence, worship, and service. God binds man to himself by the same bonds, requiring a hearty and universal recognition of his claims, and insisting that the whole of this subject should enter into, and occupy his heart and life, to be to him both his law and the fountain of his happiness. He makes it everywhere manifest, that "of Him" are all things—that all things that are, are derived from Him, whether they be creatures, relations, or events—whether they be laws or conditions of the things that are; that "through Him" are all things—that all things pass on to their right ends, by means of his constant and almighty agency and control; and that "to Him" are all things—that all creatures, actions, and events, shall be so guided along their course towards their final issues, as that they shall return to Him again, bringing with them their revenues of glory. "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen." (Rom. xi. 36.)

Warburton has, indeed, constructed a singular argument for the divine mission of Moses, out of the idea that no reference is made in the *law* to man's immortality, or to a state of future rewards and punishments; and that the whole economy of the Jews was built on considerations and motives merely temporal. It is indeed true, that in the law reference is seldom and but indistinctly made to a future

state. The reason is, that laws are mainly the expression of the *will* of the lawgiver, and are not treatises of theology, or systems of doctrine, or propounders of motives. The laws of God, by Moses, are the injunctions which issue from his sovereign authority. They have respect to the temporal well-being of the nation, as all political laws have, obedience receiving, and disobedience forfeiting, temporal prosperity and happiness; and, therefore, the rewards and punishments connected with them are of necessity confined to this world. But while this is, and must be, the case, it is by no means true that the *religion* of the Jews under the Old Testament did not teach the immortality of the soul, or the doctrine of rewards and punishments in a future state. It took this, in great measure, for granted—it being utterly inconceivable there should be a religion from God in which this doctrine is not included. Every Jew had religion taught him; he was bound to carry it with him into every relation and transaction of life, with the feeling of his responsibility to God, even while he understood he was responsible to man also. Laws administered by the civil magistrate, deal chiefly with man and his affairs as temporal; while religion, a law which *he* does not administer, teaches every one to obey him, “not only for wrath, but also for conscience’ sake”—that is, for fear of eternal consequences from God, as well as of temporal consequences from man.

That the Mosaic economy included the idea and

belief of immortality, and even of the resurrection, will be clear to any one who allows that Christ understood this economy, and what he was saying, when he argued with the Sadducees, in Matt. xxii. 29-32 : “ Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.”

This doctrine, therefore, is in the true religion from the beginning; and teaches men that good laws are from God, and to be kept for his sake—that God, to whom all men are accountable, has the providence of the world, and will bless nations as well as individuals, who fear him and work righteousness—that righteousness will exalt a nation to prosperity and power, while sin will prove a reproach to any people. The same principle continues throughout in every age and nation, showing that there was nothing exclusive or peculiar to the Jewish people, or to the Mosaic economy, in this respect. They were strong and happy when they observed all good laws ; and so are every other people.

IV. The introduction of SIN into the universe, and into our world, is historically related in divine revela-

tion, together with the nature and effects of that sin—first, in the view and government of God, and then in the character and condition of man. Religion, therefore, has much to do with *sin*. The perfection and blessedness of man can only be secured by the entire removal both of sin and its consequences ; and hence the need of salvation. Religion must, therefore, come to man now, with and through salvation. Accordingly, the Scriptures make known the plan of salvation, as originating in the sovereign love, wisdom, and grace of God ; and true religion, in the knowledge and influence of it, which had left the world when sin entered, returns by Jesus Christ, God's Son, whom he sent “to seek and to save that which was lost.” Men, by sin, had lost the knowledge of God, and of their relation to him ; Christ restores this knowledge in his capacity of divine prophet. Men, by sin, had thrown themselves into a state of opposition to God, and to the relations of their being with him, and had consequently incurred his just wrath ; Christ, as the great high priest, makes reconciliation for iniquity—puts away sin by the sacrifice of himself; and by his atonement, he, on the one hand, renders it just in God to forgive sin, and to receive sinners into favour ; and, on the other hand, overcomes the enmity of sinners' hearts, and brings them back to him in love. For “when we were enemies, we were reconciled unto God by the death of his Son.” (Rom. v. 10.) Men, till renewed by grace, are universally in rebellion against God—“not subject

to his law, neither indeed can be;" Christ, as king, by his Word and Spirit, subdues them to himself, rules and defends them, and restrains and conquers all his and their enemies. They are thus "washed, sanctified, and justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of the Lord;" hence, the true religion *coming again* from God, now dwells and reigns in their hearts.

All that we have said may be gathered, with less or more clearness, from the whole field of revelation. The Old Testament teaches these things by sacrifices, promises, and prophecies. Those to whom it was given, were directed by these means to the Messiah who was to come, and saw, dimly indeed, but really, by faith, those very things which, now that they have come, we see in noon-day light. The Spirit of God, in the patriarchs and prophets, in Christ and his apostles, took, and still takes, not its own things, but the things of Jesus, and shows them unto us. It teaches, from first to last, that salvation and true religion are to be received and enjoyed through faith, which it is its special work to produce in the hearts of those who are to be saved. They are born of water and of the Spirit, in order to see the kingdom of God. They all have Christ so lifted up outwardly before them, in the testimony of revelation, and inwardly by the saving power of the Holy Ghost, as *that Christ comes to dwell in their hearts by faith*. The true religion that is first without, thus enters and becomes also the true religion within.

V. As the outward forms in which divine things were represented were various, but the things themselves remained the same; so the PRODUCT in men's hearts and lives, from first to last, was one and the same; that is to say, the dispositions and characters, the objects and motives, of those by whom the testimony was received, were manifestly of one grand type, and after one grand model. All the essential features in the characters of Abraham, Moses, and David, of Peter, Paul, and John, are evidently identical—the work of the same divine Artist, and fashioned after the same great Pattern, even Christ, the perfect One.

VI. The WORSHIP paid by all of them to God was, in its parts, its substance, and its spirit, one and the same. They all sat at Christ's feet, and learned the law at his mouth—they all trusted to the same great atonement—they all sang similar praises, and offered up the same prayers to God—they all loved the courts of the Lord's house, and the place where his honour dwelt—they all reposed on his promises, and feared his judgments—they all habitually walked in his ways, and they all loved God, and loved their brother also.

SECTION V.

DISPENSATIONS.

History of the True Religion in Scripture confirms the doctrine that it is always the same—Dispensations: their Principles shown to be the same.

It may serve still further to illustrate and confirm these views, if we look into the subject of religion in connection with its history, as it is given in the inspired records, and with what have been called its various DISPENSATIONS.

We are not sure if this word *dispensation* has been happily chosen, or at least if a sound meaning is always attached to it either by writers or readers. We fear it has given rise to very erroneous impressions regarding religion itself, as if it had undergone important and even essential changes. The very fact that so many writers have differed from one another, not only as to the nature, but as to the number, of these dispensations, seems to prove that they exist rather in the conceptions of the mind, and for convenience sake, than in their own nature. It is true there is a difference—a practical difference—in the modes of communication of the divine truth and law

in the times of the Patriarchs, and of Moses, and of Christ. In the times of the Patriarchs, communications from God were not made by a written record, but by dreams, visions, and divine impressions; in those of Moses, by a written law, and by visible and regular institutions, and rituals; and in those of Christ, by a completed inspired record, which perfects the knowledge of the whole will of God for man's salvation. Yet the truths themselves, however communicated, were not different, but the same, so far as they went, each succeeding communication being merely an addition to what had been already received.

It is of little consequence whether we take the period from Adam to Noah, from Noah to Abraham, from Abraham to Moses, and from Moses to Christ; or adopt the Patriarchal, Mosaic, and Christian divisions. All the knowledge of the *first* period was not communicated to Adam personally and solely, but to others by gradual increases, till the time of Noah: of the *second* period, not to Noah personally and alone, but by degrees, till the time of Abraham: of the *third* period, not to Abraham alone, but it went on increasing to Isaac and Jacob, &c., till the time of Moses: of the *fourth* period, not to Moses alone, but to many more, advancing and growing till the time of Christ: and of the *fifth* period, not by Christ himself alone, but rising still through his apostles till the close of the Divine Revelation.

The same observations apply to that other division of Patriarchal, Mosaic, and Christian. The whole proceeds steadily on its path from the beginning, and is like the sun, which shines “more and more unto the perfect day.”

The original state of Adam was one of innocence. He bore the image of his Creator, and was fitted for the service and happiness which his Creator designed for him. He being an intelligent creature, and responsible to his God, it is manifest that all his service required to have the character of obedience, and that his happiness should stand to his obedience in the relation of a reward; in other words, that though perfect as a moral creature, he should be under a moral law and government. He could not, even on account of his perfection itself, be allowed to occupy the place of an independent, self-ruling, or mere self-pleasing creature. That would have been to constitute him a god. God, therefore, gave him a law; or, as it is often, though not very properly, expressed, God entered into a covenant with him. This law or covenant, in whichever light we choose to regard it, was at least the will of his Maker, which Adam was not at liberty to refuse, which he could not but receive and regard as the law of his God, and as “holy, just, and good.” He was, therefore, by simple authority of God, put under it, and he lovingly approved of it on that account. This law, as was most just and right, established a connection between the continuance of his life and his obedience

on the one hand, and between the forfeiture of life and his disobedience or rebellion on the other. On this account that law or covenant has been called the Covenant of Works. It might with equal propriety be called the covenant of life and death, because on works of obedience or disobedience depended man's life and death.

Adam, indeed, had a spontaneous virtue issuing from a pure and virtue-loving heart; and therefore would have done what was right though he had been bound by no law or covenant. It was necessary, however, that there should be a *test* of his conduct, in order to show whether that conduct had the quality of obedience or not; and the goodness of God made that test the smallest and easiest that could be devised. It was thus it came to be ordained that Adam, because God so willed it, should abstain from the fruit of one particular tree. The very insignificance of the thing forbidden, taken in connection with the vast amplitude of all that was allowed, rendered disobedience in such a case utterly inexcusable—far more inexcusable, surely, than if that tree only had been allowed, and all other trees forbidden. The trial was thus the very easiest and gentlest that could possibly be—the very smallest that could answer the end of being a trial at all.

Thus we see that Adam must live and be governed, not by his own holy moral instincts, but by positive divine law—must be moved, not by what pleases

himself, and because it pleases him, but by what he knows will please his God; and, therefore, he must be made acquainted with some one thing at least of which the enjoyment might please himself, but would be most offensive to his God. In this critical posture he stood before the forbidden tree—on it hung with its fruit his life or death.

If any one should be disposed to make a mock of the thing as too trifling to be connected with such tremendous consequences, let him see in it the nature and majesty of principle, and the most striking manifestation of supreme law, in their connection with the simplest outward form: let him remember that a small puncture may take away the life of the greatest hero, and by so doing bring the greatest calamities on a whole nation.

Of the many truths taught by this first grand transaction, this one, it may be observed, is most clear, namely, that the life and happiness of man must depend on obedience to divine law. This truth will be found as prominent in the gospel as it is here. The interposition of mercy for the salvation of lost man, so far from setting it aside, gloriously confirms it: “For as by the disobedience of one many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”

It was certainly made known to Adam that he, as the first man, from whom all men besides should spring, was transacting not only for himself, but, as the first, the head of all men, was at the same

time the representative of all whose father he, by God's eternal purpose, was destined to become. He could not but know that his children, by the very law of their nature, which is the law of God, must be born in his likeness, and enter at their birth on the conditions of his life—must, in other words, come into his lot—must live with the elements, and run in the course, of that life. He knew that the whole race was in him as its root or spring—that *all* must live if *he* lived in obedience to God's law—and that *all* must die if he once forfeited or lost *his* life.

Such intimate connection, or rather identification, in nature and in law, of innumerable individuals, is characteristic of the divine procedure towards the human race, as by a little consideration may become obvious to all. The father of a family, the founder of a nation, or a legislator, may be taken as an example of the necessity and justice of this principle. Blessings and calamities are never confined to the individual by whose conduct they have been procured. They affect not himself only, but more or less his whole connected circle. The wisdom or virtue of a prince tends, indeed, to make himself happy, but the whole nation participates in the happiness; and his folly or crimes will often prove the ruin of a whole commonwealth over which he presides; so that unless men were entirely independent of each other, and were simply so many isolated individuals, which God and nature absolutely forbid, this law of connection or

identification must hold and operate for good or evil throughout all generations.

The legal condition in which Adam was placed by his Maker, was the first expression, in its highest, purest, and widest form, of the principle or law of which we now speak. It embraced the whole family of man as one physical, moral, social community, and placed them, at their origin in Adam and Eve, their great progenitors, in circumstances which comprehended them all in one. The obedience or disobedience of the first pair, is made to flow out from them, to affect the whole stream of their offspring; or rather, those who were to spring from them, were, in God's eye and purpose, summed up in their persons, and included in the same covenant with them; and Adam and Eve were, doubtless, made aware that such was the predicament in which they stood to God and to their race.

The necessity and justice of this principle of the divine government, against which so many object, are yet so clear, that men feel themselves compelled, in all subordinate things, to adopt and follow it. Legislators and rulers feel that they could accomplish little good without it. They have often to commit many to the charge of one, in whose obedience to them, and happiness under them, the many will be made obedient and happy. They have to unite a whole army to a general, or trust some great affair, affecting the good of the kingdom, to a single ambassador, whom they hold responsible for all, even

while at the same time they absolve not any one individual from the necessity of answering for his own voluntary conduct, in the transaction common to them all.

And what, we would ask, are the institutions they set up, but so many fountains which send forth their influence, for good or for evil, on all the people around, who, so long as they remain in the land, must feel the force of that influence? Rulers and statesmen cannot permit each individual to be in all things the sole original spring of his own principles and actions. The punishments they inflict on the disobedient, affect not only the guilty individuals themselves, but, to a greater or less extent, those also who descend from them, and are intimately associated with them. So deeply, indeed, is this law engraven in human nature, that were statesmen and legislators to overlook it, society itself would retain, uphold, and act upon it. We every day see, that the very instincts of human nature, and even the consent of universal conscience, approve by imitation of that principle in the divine law and government which "visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations;" and by so doing, identifies them with one another, both in person and in conduct. By this means, it is most wisely ordered, that each individual should have, as it were, a crowding of motives upon him from all whom he loves, to prevail with him to keep the course of duty, and by so doing to contribute to their

good as well as to his own; and, on the other hand, to avoid what would prove injurious both to himself and them.

SECTION VI.

TEMPTATION.

Necessity of its Universality—Tempters or Triers—Means or Instruments of Trial—Laws of Satan's Temptations.

We observe, that the transgression and fall of man were connected with *Temptation*. There were inducements held out to him to rebel, and to eat the forbidden fruit. Here, again, there comes into view, another law or rule of the divine government, which seems to embrace the whole moral creation. The reason is, that obedience, in its purity and fulness, can only exist where there are inducements to the contrary course of action—where a distinct choice between it and its opposite is proposed, and must be made. The will of the Eternal King must positively be preferred to every kind of mere self-pleasing ; and there must be a prompt rejection of all opposing reasons that may be suggested, and of all advantages that might appear likely to

accrue from taking another way. Hence, obedience, in the proper sense of it, can only come fully into view, can only reach its perfection and confirmation, or, in other words, can only in reality exist in the creature, when God is not only perfectly followed, but when what he forbids is firmly resisted and overcome. This rule is well known, and universally recognised, and approved among men. Who does not feel the elevation which obedience and loyalty attain, when they have been put to the severest proof, and have remained uncompromised and unshaken?

Thus, Adam's fidelity must be tested by temptation, which is nothing more than trial. He was tried; in that trial he failed, and becoming disobedient, he lost the favour of God, and life which lies in that favour.

This trial of obedience goes on to be made in every man. Indeed, every thing that happens to us tries us every day on the same principles, and with similar consequences. Even the Son of God, the second Adam, underwent trial to the uttermost; but, being strong, he held fast his fidelity, and came forth from temptation, with the glory of a perfect obedience to the Supreme Lawgiver and King. His exalted obedience to God shone out of severest sufferings and trials; and therefore he was crowned with glory and honour, as his own just reward, and for the benefit of all whom he, by his tried obedience and death, redeems from Adam's sin and ruin.

And, as there must be trial or temptation, so there must also be a TRIER or a TEMPTER; since it cannot be conceived that such things as these are the offspring of chance or accident, or that they can be left entirely without regulation or control in the providence of God. They are too important in themselves, and too fruitful of consequences, to be left to work at random.

God is the supreme trier, and Satan the grand tempter. God tries, when he requires obedience to the utmost of the creature's power, in circumstances which make it difficult to be rendered; and in order that it may be seen and admired by all, and confirmed and crowned by him. Or, he visits disobedience and rebelliousness with such chastisements as are fitted to break down the spirit of the guilty, and to bring them back to a dutiful behaviour. By such trials of offenders he also, on the one hand, brings to light and into greater strength any good thing which may yet remain in those on whom the trial falls; or, on the other, shows that no principle of obedience is left, and that the continuance or increase of the punishment is justly merited, and righteously applied. He never tempts or induces any one to do evil. It is only good he tries; and he tries it only for good and holy ends. Satan, the grand tempter, on the other hand, seeks to overthrow good and propagate evil, by misrepresenting and disparaging good, and by adorning and recommending sin. His object is, therefore, the very

reverse of God's; which is, to lead his creatures to perfection and blessedness.

God sets free, and yet over-rules the tempter, so as that Satan's efforts, and even partial success, are made to redound to God's glory, and to advance his eternal purposes to their perfect accomplishment. He suffers him to prevail with Eve to transgress his law, and thus to furnish the occasion for displaying the riches of the divine grace, and the glory of Christ's redemption.

Viewing God as the trier of men, it becomes him to bring forth the evidence, which shall prove to the world that the conduct of his creatures is not only right in itself, but is a real obedience to him; which proof, as we have seen, is resistance to temptation, or standing fast on trial.

With regard to the first sin of Satan, we humbly apprehend that God made use of the very highest intellectual and moral excellence which he had conferred on angelic natures as instruments and means of the trials of those natures themselves. It seems clear, that the very glory and greatness of him who is afterwards called Satan were his trial or temptation—that by his excellence, which he derived from God, he was induced to compare himself with his Maker, and to conclude that his position in reference to Him was not what it ought to have been; and that it became him, who had such elevation, to enjoy independence of will, as well as to receive the tribute of obedience from those who, in reality, were far in-

ferior to himself. In this trial he failed, and being “lifted up with pride”—spiritual pride, pride of real excellence, but still pride rising against the Highest—he “fell into condemnation,” and became the avowed, the greatest, and fiercest enemy of Him from whom his excellence, now lost, had been derived, who would not tolerate his arrogance, and who, in the exercise of his omnipotent justice, punished him with expulsion from glory, binding him with chains of darkness, and reserving him unto the judgment of the great day.

When Man is to be tried, God finds this fallen creature disposed to tempt, and qualified for the task. He, therefore, permits him to use successfully his arts for this end, and lets his attempt on the fidelity of our first parents stand as a specimen of the mode in which he makes all his subsequent efforts. He, by outward things—creatures of God, things that are good—and by stirring up thoughts and feelings towards these things within the heart, so withdraws attention from the divine will, so fills the soul with desire, so distorts truth, so perplexes the judgment, and so leads on the individual to his own conclusions, as that nothing but a vivid recollection of the divine commandment, and a distinct acknowledgment of the obedience due to Him who gave it, can prevent the foul transgression. He seeks to make the act to which he prompts appear fair, virtuous, or beneficial: “Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” He would lead man to

assert independence of his Maker, and to regard God as jealous of his proper grandeur and happiness. He would *lead* him to exert his will, independently of, or even in opposition to, the will of the Supreme, as he himself had done. In other words, he would have the will of the creature to sit on the throne, and to sway the sceptre over himself.

The *Spheres* allotted to the tempted and the tempter are so fixed by God, that the one shall not force, nor the other be forced, to do evil. Satan can only accomplish his ends by connecting thoughts with outward sensible things, which are the creatures of God, or by means of the thoughts and actions of others. Thus he tempted our first parents by the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. By winds from the wilderness, and fires from heaven, by the thievish and murderous dispositions of Sabeans and Chaldeans, by sore personal disease, and by the foolish counsel of her that was dearest to him, he tempted and tried the patriarch Job. Thus, also, by the contemplation of the increase and glory of his kingdom, he tempted David to number the people, contrary to the commandment; and by the envy of the princes, and the pride of the king, he tempted Daniel to cease from the duty of prayer. And, as a last instance, by hunger, by obscurity, by poverty, he thus tempted our blessed Saviour;—by hunger, to turn stones into bread; by obscurity, to cast himself down from the pinnacle of the temple in the sight of the people;

and by poverty, to desire the possession of the kingdoms of the world.

The *first specimen* of temptation, therefore, seems to constitute the law of it throughout all ages. It is so conducted still, and always in such a manner as to conceal the real author and his agency. It makes the subject of it, both in appearance and in reality, to act from his will and choice: he feels no violence or external force, but “is drawn away of his own lust and enticed;” and hence his responsibility remains.

There can be no doubt that within the sphere of temptation which is permitted to him, the fallen spirit, with his legions, observes RULES or LAWS prescribed by his skill and experience, and conducts this portion of his dreadful affairs in such a way as not to draw attention to himself, and as not to startle or alarm, by efforts that are abrupt and irregular. The laws of his temptation must be so adjusted to the laws of nature as to seem to be operations of these laws themselves. His polity and jurisprudence, within his province, by permission of God, must be made to have the form, the constancy, and the energy, of a regulated and mutually co-operative kingdom; otherwise his exertions among men would all appear in the light of wonders and miracles.

What we now say is no more strange or incredible, than the fact that fallen and corrupted man has scope in this world and state of being for the exercise of his wisdom, for the framing of laws, and

for conducting government, however injurious all this may prove to the happiness of society. It must be acknowledged that sin has its laws no less than holiness, and that the subjects of the one are not less obedient, nor less willingly so, than those of the other. Light and darkness are kingdoms, dividing between them the whole intelligent creation, and warring against each other with their appropriate armies. Satan, the prince of darkness, has a skill that is great, though inferior to that of the God of light—as far inferior as cunning is to wisdom, or plausible lies to simple truth.

SECTION VII.

SALVATION.

Its substance, history, and development—Adam, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, the Patriarchs, Moses—The same from first to last.

To destroy the works of the devil in our fallen world being the purpose of the divine mercy, the object of the mission of the Son of God, and the substance of salvation, it was made known to Adam immediately

after the fall that “the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent;” which communication is the germ out of which grows the whole developed scheme—the perfect fruit-bearing tree of revelation. This revelation and promise is the announcement of a *second* Adam and a second Life: an Adam and a Life remedial and restorative. The second Adam, the seed of the woman, and not of the man, coming under the law of God by his birth, as the first had come by his creation, and standing at the head of those whom the Father had given him to redeem, as Adam stood at the head of his race, is to overcome that Wicked One by whom the first head had been overcome; is to destroy sin, and by destroying it is to destroy also the misery which flows from it; and is so to weaken and restrain the tempter, as that his own elect, new-born progeny shall be safe from any second fall through means of any repeated temptation.

This promise seems clearly to have indicated to Adam that he owed the continuance of his life and of his race on earth, as well as all his hopes of recovery, to One who should afterwards be born of a virgin, and adorned with an innocence like that in which he himself had been created; and so, though no mention was made to him of *faith*, or of its place in the kingdom of redemption, in which the virgin’s Son was to reign, yet the simple announcement to him from the mouth of God of such a mercy prepared, and to be bestowed, was sufficient in itself to prove

that it ought to be, and must be, *believed*. In the promise itself he had God's word as a ground of faith, and God's authority virtually demanding his unhesitating belief. The teaching of God cannot but carry with it an assurance of the truth of what he teaches, and therefore cannot but bind him that is taught to receive it as infallible truth.

On this promise the faith of all who were saved for many generations rested; while it should seem that, from time to time, from Abel to Enoch, additional revelations regarding the nature of the salvation foretold, and its application and fruits, were given. It is clear that Abel must have been taught the doctrine of sacrifice, and Enoch the coming of the Lord to final judgment; and that in his walk with God he must have learned many things from so divine a fellowship.

The same law of salvation was renewed and established with Noah. (Gen. vi. 18.) When God was about to destroy the world for its enormous wickedness, he gave to him some most striking material emblems, both of the nature and the means of that salvation—as in the ark floating on the surface of the waters, and in the safety of himself, his family, and the living creatures within it, all of them so secure and so well provided for amidst the otherwise universal destruction. He must also have learned many other doctrines from God's dealings with him on that wonderful occasion; such as the election of a people to be saved out of all nations—

the preservation of the world from utter destruction by the seed of the woman—the purity of all that are saved in him—the washing away of the filth of the flesh, and the separation of those who are saved from a world that lieth in wickedness, the very doctrine taught us by Christian baptism (1 Pet. iii. 18–22)—the blessing which comes upon the whole earth by the sacrifice of Christ (Gen. viii. 20, 21, ix. 8–11)—or that Christ is “the Saviour of all men, and specially of them that believe.” To all this was added the *sign* of the bow in the cloud, which is a beautiful, visible, and *universal* sign and seal from heaven of this covenant of salvation. All which show that God did not change, but only confirm, enlarge, and impress, what he had already made known to Adam and Abel, and Seth and Enoch.

When we come down to the times of Abraham, we find another renewal and a farther adaptation of this great law to the new circumstances which arose with that remarkable patriarch. He is to be the head of a special nation, to whom is to pertain (Rom. ix. 4, 5) “the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises: whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ is to come, who is over all, God blessed for ever.” That nation is to be the subject of a history unfolding the doctrine of redemption and the laws of the Divine Providence, and showing to the world for ever after the methods and the reasons of God’s

government of his Church, in its corporate capacity, so long as it exists in this fallen world. Abraham, accordingly, is now informed that the seed of the woman, which was promised to Adam, is to be *his* seed also: "In thee and in thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed." The doctrine of FAITH, implied before, is to him distinctly and explicitly taught: he is made fully aware of "the righteousness which is of faith," or of the righteousness which is to be obtained by faith; and then this law of righteousness, thus enlarged, is confirmed to him by the rite of *circumcision*, which is the *seal* of that righteousness.

There is here no change in the nature of the thing itself, but only a rising into prominence of its various features. The seal of the bow in the cloud is not superseded by that of circumcision, which is now added. The bow is a pledge to all the world who behold it, and to the descendants of Abraham among the rest; but circumcision, which is in the flesh, is "a seal of the righteousness which is of faith" to all who put their trust in him who is the promised seed. Because of Christ the world was assured it should not be deluged again, and the bow is a pledge of this truth to all men, whether they believe or not. But now it is shown that because of Christ sin is forgiven, and eternal salvation secured to all who believe in his name; and these bear the fruits and seals of their faith and of his righteousness in their own persons.

It is not necessary to refer further to the developments of the true religion to Abraham, since the apostle, in his Epistles to the Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews, has so minutely described them. It may, however, be remarked in general, that the revelation to him of these things was made rather by distinct announcements, by providential events, and by enjoined transactions, than by established rites and institutions.

The same things continued to receive important illustrations and additions in the times of Isaac and Jacob, and the twelve patriarchs, till Abraham's descendants multiplied into a great people, till they were prepared to take the form, to receive the institutions, and to enjoy the privileges, of a free and independent nation; and till their new circumstances rendered further enlargements and adaptations of the same great principles proper and necessary. Not Israel only, but also the world, needed to be taught that religion, besides being a personal, is also a *national* thing, providing for all necessities, regulating all duties, sanctifying all relations, and setting up all needful models and examples.

Accordingly, under Moses, God caused this people to be born as a nation at once. By signs and mighty wonders, Pharaoh is compelled to let them depart from his land. They are delivered out of bondage; and, even as a nation, are redeemed with the shedding of blood in sacrifice; or rather, they are by that means set free, in order that they might be a

nation. They are led through the Red Sea, where they are *baptized* (1 Cor. x. 2), in order to be separated from the rest of the world. Immediately after this, they are taught to sing triumphant songs to God, their deliverer. They are then tried with hardships and toils, and shut up to the necessity of living by faith. They receive divine sustenance, and are led on to Sinai to hear the law of their God. They listen to the voice of Jehovah speaking amidst such displays of majesty as were fitted to make on their minds the deepest impressions of his holiness, even as they had but lately enjoyed the most affecting experience of his sovereign covenanted mercy. The whole people, both in their individual and national capacity, stand around Sinai to obtain a law, which shall be an express proof and consequence of the covenant made with their fathers, and with them in their fathers. Hence, they and the world are made to perceive that the eternal principles and rules of morality are parts and fruits of religion itself; that redemption and grace lead to law and obedience; that justification conducts immediately to sanctification; and that mercy honours and magnifies righteousness. They have a renewal of the same promise and law, now more fully unfolded than before, and they renew their expressions of accepting of it; all of them acknowledging themselves to be not only indebted to their God for his love and mercy, but bound also by love and mercy to yield to his law a cheerful and entire obedience.

God knew, however, that his people could not, and would not, perfectly keep the law, or fulfil their covenant, and, therefore, he made provision in the law itself for the needful forgiveness and purification. This he did in the institution of the ceremonial law, by which the same end should be answered, in their case, as is secured in the times of the gospel by those provisions of mercy which are set before us in the significant act of the blessed Saviour washing the disciples' feet after supper. Indeed, the ceremonial law is but the gospel shadowed and anticipated.

One grand truth came out of the covenant to Adam, viz., that of a Redeemer saving his people from their sins *by his death*. Another to Noah, viz., that all the generations of men, till the consummation of all things, shall owe their *preservation* to this Saviour—this Redeemer, who is to be “the Saviour of all men, and especially of those that believe.” Another again, to Abraham, viz., *justification* and eternal salvation, to be obtained and enjoyed *through faith* in the Saviour. And another to Moses and the whole nation of Israel, viz., that those who are justified through faith, are redeemed from *all their iniquities*, to be made a “peculiar people, zealous of good works.” There were, indeed, faith and holiness in Adam, and Noah, and Abraham; but then these, and the necessity of them, were brought more distinctly into view, and were seen and recognised at length, to be not merely spontaneous

effects, but principles and laws of divine grace. A stronger light was thus from time to time shed on the Redeemer and his redemption, which made him, and those things that flowed from him and led to him, far more distinctly to appear.

In looking at all that has been said, one cannot fail to be struck with the fact of Adam's standing at the head and as the surety of his race, and of Christ's occupying a similar place at the head and as the surety of those who are to be saved by him. This fact is reducible to the doctrine usually denominated Imputation. In Adam, all men are by nature included; and therefore, in his sin and death all men are involved. "In him all die." In Christ, again, all the redeemed are comprehended; and therefore, in Him they "all are made alive."

Viewing the whole subject of religion in these lights, it is impossible not to perceive that what is called the Law, or Mosaic dispensation, is nothing else than the gospel under another name and form; that it comprehends the same religion, teaches and enforces the same morality, and raises men to the same holy character. Indeed, a large portion of the New Testament is taken up in showing that they are substantially the same—that Christ did, and taught, and suffered, only what "Moses in the law and the prophets did write,"—that Christ "came not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil." The very details of the Mosaic dispensation, are, expounded and applied by the apostles, accord-

ing to this principle, viz., that “to Christ gave all the prophets witness.” (Act x. 43.) Therefore it is, we conclude, that men, before Christ’s coming, had the same religion with that of the Gospel, and were saved on the same principles as those on which Christians are saved; in other words, that the true religion is but one, and that the effects of it are one and the same.

SECTION VIII.

MORALITY.

What it is—Extent of it—First Inward—A part of Religion—Identified with it—Responsibility of man—Moral acts should spring from Knowledge and Belief—Has nothing to do with Divine reasons.

Morality being nothing else than the conformity of an intelligent creature to the will of his Creator, may be viewed in two lights, or rather as consisting of two parts.

First, The WILL of God—it matters little how expressed—directing the judgments, sentiments,

and actions of intelligent creatures, which is Moral Law. And,

Second, The perfect subjection of the will of these creatures to that will or law of God ; which perfect subjection and conformity constitute obedience or morality in them. There is not, and there cannot be, any true morality but this.

The extent of this will of God, and of the communication of it to the creature, is the exact extent of the obedience due. To make it less or more than this is by so much to diminish or add to the law of God ; which must be immoral, since it is an act of the creature giving law to itself—an arrogating of divine power and right—an assuming of the place of the supreme Lawgiver. Consequently, the yielding obedience to any such mere creature-law, must be an act of disobedience to the divine authority, or of rebellion against God himself.

The fountain of being is clearly the fountain of law. God sends forth from himself the great streams of created existences, opens up their channels, marks out their courses, and fixes their bounds; which bounds they may not exceed or transgress, without offence to him, without injury to the creation, or without being themselves impaired or lost.

It is not our object at present to show the wisdom or justice of all this; though it must appear self-evident, that every law of the all-perfect God cannot be otherwise than holy, and just, and good. If any law of his should be felt as hard, or viewed as wrong

by any one, this must arise from his moral blindness or unjust antipathy, and not from any imperfection in the law itself. It shows, not that the law, but the subject of it, ought to be corrected. It is found universally, that, in proportion as man's obedience approaches to perfection, so his perception and feeling of the excellence of the divine laws increase, till they reach to a pure ecstasy of approbation and delight.

This law of morality respects, first and chiefly, the *inner* man—the soul, the heart, the will, the conscience. It is not, indeed, obeyed at all, unless it be first obeyed there. It claims, most justly, the entire devotedness of the soul to God; and after that, the uniform correspondence of the outward actions at once with that inward subjection, and with the very letter of the law as revealed or written.

Whatever communication, therefore, comes to us from God demands admission into the understanding, the heart, and the life—it comes with the force and authority of divine law; and therefore binds the understanding, heart, and life respectively. Hence truth, all truth taught us by God, is law; and this, whether it be what is usually called religious or moral truth. All such truth binds religious faith on us, and binds us to put faith in it; for no man has any right to refuse, or deny, or hate any doctrine of God. Let it but come from Him, and this very circumstance gives it all possible right to be received

and obeyed. Thus, all true religion is morality or obedience; and all true and proper morality is religion. Religion is the essence, the principle, the law of morality; and Morality is religion operating legitimately in our understanding, affections, will, conscience, and actions. It is plainly impossible, therefore, to separate them, except it be in our imagination, and for the purpose of obtaining a clearer view of their essential union or unity.

Morality, therefore, being nothing else than religion in practice, the two cannot be disjoined, without impairing or destroying both as binding upon us. Religion cannot subsist in a man without commanding his obedience; and obedience, again, cannot be yielded except to God dictating law, or, which is the same thing, to religion; for no man can venerate and love the God whom he will not believe, whom he does not seek to please, and whose law he will not obey. Nor, on the other hand, can any man obey and please that God whom he does not know, nor venerate, nor love. Hence the declaration of Christ: “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.” Love is God’s dominion—that is, true religion in the soul; and obedience to him who is loved, is the only true morality. Hence, if there be true religion in the heart, it will naturally and necessarily create a thirst for the knowledge of the divine will; and this it will do, as certainly as it will submit to that will when it is made known. Accordingly, we find

at his conversion Saul of Tarsus first putting the question, "Who art thou, Lord?" and after he has been informed, putting that other question, "What wouldst thou have me to do?" Religion appears to be the life, and morality to be the form which that life puts on. The one is the principle of action, and the other is the action itself.

That religion and morality are thus identified in the pages of inspiration admits of no doubt. God most certainly and justly claims for all truth which he communicates to men, a thorough belief on their part; and their unbelief is the very highest and most provoking disobedience. For every truth of his he claims the obedience, that is to say, the ready concurrence, of the understanding and the judgment. For every offer he makes of gifts, he righteously requires the heart's ready acceptance. For every commandment he gives, he demands the subjection of the will. For every judgment respecting right and wrong which he pronounces or executes, he is entitled to the sanction and approval of the conscience. And for every express law which he enjoins, he insists on the conformity of the whole life. To disbelieve, not to love, not to obey, is, therefore, essentially, and in the highest sense, an immorality. It is against the very spring of law—against religion—against God.

Ignorance of the truth of God, whether that ignorance proceed from carelessness, or guilt, or depravity—when, in other words, it is voluntary or

brought on by immoral acts or habits—is immoral; and is, therefore, justly condemned by the law of God. Should this condemnation be thought unreasonable or severe, it ought to be considered, that man's whole nature is, and must be, moral; that God has a right to dictate to all his faculties; and that every wise human government and judge finds the necessity of acting on the very same principle. Careless ignorance of law is not held to be an excuse for the transgression of it. The means of knowing it being furnished, it is binding on every man as a duty to make use of these means, so as to become acquainted with it. When human governments punish for the transgression of a law which the transgressor knows not, they do not punish him for his ignorance, but for his transgression, and leave him to condemn his own guilty ignorance as the procurer of his misery. Were any other principle to be followed, either in human or divine government, it is easy to see that any man could free himself from all responsibility, simply by keeping himself in profoundest ignorance, or by plunging into all wickedness, until his depravity became so great, that he could no longer distinguish between good and evil, and could not see or feel any satisfactory reason why he should be punished for any offence, in any degree. Society cannot bear the man who acts from a moral sense thus perverted or destroyed.

Men are therefore justly held, both by God and

man, as responsible for their belief; both God and man alike holding the belief of the truth as a first duty, and as binding at once the understanding and conscience.

In connection with this point, it ought also to be remembered, that no action of a moral creature ought to spring from mere emotion, or instinct, or passion; but from knowledge and belief; since a moral action must spring from that which is moral likewise—that is, from the mind and heart—and must be regulated by known truth and law. Unless, therefore, we could annihilate our moral nature—withdraw ourselves from, and escape out of, every moral condition—there must be morality or immorality in every thought, affection, belief, and feeling; and this independently altogether of the outward action itself.

This is what the whole Scriptures, from first to last, imply and teach. They treat morality as a thing which embraces the knowledge and belief of truth, and the subjection of the whole man to God. They do not absolve men from these obligations, on the ground of ignorance or error. They represent the divine wrath as falling even on the heathen, “who know not God,” and who “call not on his name.” And Christ expressly teaches, that “this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than the light, because their deeds were evil.” (John iii. 19.) Paul, in like manner, speaks of “vengeance” being

taken “on them that *know not* God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” They thus identify religion and morality, founding them both on the will of God; on the relation in which he has made man to stand to himself; and on the eternal laws of his providence. They never give to, or recognise in, man, any right to withdraw himself into the liberty of ignorance, or depravity, or unbelief, so as to be justified by these evils from the claims of truth, righteousness, and vengeance; and while they make a distinction between transgressing knowingly and ignorantly, they yet in either case hold the man guilty of transgression. They distinguish in such cases between the degrees only, and not between the qualities of the offence: “That servant which knew his Lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes.” (Luke xii. 47, 48.)

Morality being thus obedience to the will of God, has nothing to do with the Reasons of that will, however pleasing or profitable it may be to us humbly to inquire into them. It is not necessary, and would not always be befitting God; nay, it must often be utterly impossible that he should give an account of his matters to creatures. It is enough for us to know what his will is; and that that will is his law—that he will always do that which is right—that he in all respects acts consist-

ently with his own perfect nature, and in harmony with the whole frame of being, with all the conditions and right actions of every thing in the universe. This His will, constitutes "the fitness of things," and is therefore adapted to that fitness. It is always good; and constitutes as well as exemplifies perfect "benevolence." It establishes all harmonies, and is the law of "sympathy." It ordains all final causes, and is the grand principle and rule of all "utility."

SECTION IX.

WISDOM OF DIVINE MORALITY.

Its simplicity and comprehensiveness—Its principle—Identifying it with Religion—Motives—Folly of attempting to separate Morality from Religion—They must be united in Education.

The wisdom and goodness of God in setting forth his sole will as a complete, universal, and eternally binding law, appear from two things:—

1. That the simplicity of it makes it fit for being a rule to all men so limited in their capacities, so

little able to find their way through endless questions that might arise, and so ill qualified to judge among the infinite complexities of moral questions. What could the world do, if every man had to be guided in the way of his duty by his own mind, or by such works as the “Ductor Dubitantium” of Jeremy Taylor? How uncertain are the conclusions, and how confounding to the reason and the memory, are the steps of all such instructors and guides!

2. That He alone sees all relations of things, all causes and effects—the highest ultimate good—the eternal advantage or disadvantage of every deed; and, therefore, is alone capable of so condensing and simplifying law, as to make a few short sentences, easily understood and remembered, far more luminous to men, and far better fitted to lead them in the right way to the highest excellence and felicity of their nature, than whole volumes of rules collected and digested by the ablest legislators and moralists.

We have beautiful instances of this simplicity and comprehensiveness of the divine morals, in the law of the ten commandments, common to the ancient and to the Christian forms of truth. This law is clearly a summary of all the moral duty which we owe to God and to man. It comprehends all religion and morals; and yet it is but ten branches springing from one principal root or stem, viz., Love. Love to God sends off the

grand shoot of love to man: "And on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." That one law of love is the mother-law of all the rest. It produces, and dictates, and controls them. Again, love to God and man existing in the heart, is there the root and stem of that on which grow all the fruits of the Spirit, and all obedience to that law of love which emanates from Him who is love and supreme law. Love is thus the whole law; and by love is it all fulfilled. Thus, also, is the character of God made the foundation and example of our love to Him, as well as of all the duties by which our love, under unerring and heavenly direction, is shown and expressed.

In this way, again, religion and morals are seen to be identified in God, in his law, and in man's heart. We are moral only in so far as we have that love and law in us; and religious only by the same means, and in equal proportion. The heart that loves God, will worship him—that is, be religious; and will also serve God, and behave aright towards men—which is morality.

It deserves also to be noticed, that real practical religion and genuine morality, are not only, or in the first place, outward in the life, but are first Inward in the Heart, and thence send forth their streams over the life. Otherwise, they are partial, wanting in their very essence, and are mere pretence and hypocrisy, alike hateful to God and to man; for who can bear in others, though he may allow in

himself, a feigned love, and services which want all heart? Who can tolerate being made the dupe of mere appearances, and of pure deceits? Can God? Can we?

Religion and morality thus bound together, and dwelling and ruling in man's heart, must, it is evident, be accompanied and prompted by Motives which God proposes and approves; for he cannot but be regarded as supreme over that which moves, even as he is supreme over that which is moved. These motives, indeed, are themselves parts of religion and morality, to which they belong, and are therefore necessarily in harmony with them, springing from the same source, and designing the same end. Hence, in all our actions, we must be influenced by that very consideration which operates in the mind of God. And that consideration with him being *his own glory*, our grand motive should be the same. In other words, He, and we his obedient children, must intend the same thing,—He in his acting, and in commanding our actions; and we in our actings, and in our obedience to his will and law.

There are those who pretend to despise motives, and who justify themselves when they perform, from whatever consideration, an action that is materially good. But, besides the refutation which this receives from their own abhorrence of hollow and heartless appearances, if they will but consider aright the very nature of religion and morality, they must perceive

that the motives by which a man is influenced in regard to them constitute an essential part of their very nature. An act of alms-giving may be performed from selfishness; a kind speech may be uttered through deceit and flattery; and acts of worship may be engaged in to gain the esteem and applause of men:—in all which cases the conduct is held detestable by all but the base actor himself—if even he can inwardly approve in himself what he knows he could not help despising in another. No knave loves knavery directed and practised against himself; and no conscience can be brought abstractly to pronounce deceit better than honesty, falsehood than truth, or cruelty than mercy.

It will not be denied, that the Scriptures everywhere set a high value on these essential elements of religious and moral life. They declare that “the Lord looketh on the heart,” and enjoin us, “whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, to do all to the glory of God.” They teach us, that unless right actions are done in order to please God, they have no value, and shall receive no reward from him—that they are nothing but “the blind and the halt and the maimed offered in sacrifice to him;”— destitute of the most necessary parts, of the principal qualities which he requires, and are what he hates and abhors.

The simple mention of some of the motives which revelation under all dispensations supplies, is sufficient to satisfy every one of their purity and

excellence;—such as God's will, glory, mercy, example, favour—the good and happiness of his creatures, the benefit of the world, the blessedness of eternity, the obtaining of redemption, and the awful consequences of disobedience. All these are, in their very nature, adapted to the moral structure of the human soul, and to its condition in this fallen world. They are all great, impressive, permanent, and unchangeable. They all rise above the influence of the ever-shifting affairs of the world, and are all fitted in themselves to have an equally commanding force over men of every age, rank, and condition. They all tend to the formation of the same character, all lead up to the same high and stedfast virtue, and they all bring those who are under their control into the enjoyment of the same felicity. And as it is religion that supplies them to morality, and morality that draws them from religion; so here, again, we see how these two are essentially united, and form inseparable parts the one of the other.

If the view we have taken of this subject be a just one, then it is most evident that to separate religious principle from moral duty, and yet to expect the full benefit of either, is the same thing as to conclude that God will suffer man to change, to separate, and to dispose of His eternal ordinations and most fixed laws at his pleasure, and will permit him the use of a power to make a dead dismembered half do the work of a living whole. There are not, and

cannot be, true morals without true religion, any more than there can be living acts without life, or good acts without right principles; and, therefore, to place morals apart from religion, is to place them where they have no life to animate, no unerring light to direct, and no fixed law to regulate them. To preclude all mad attempts of this kind, God has bound them together in the very constitution of nature—in his laws and covenants to men, in the actual characters of all who have known and loved him, in the events of human life, and in the demonstrations which his judgments, in his providential dealings with the world, have always given.

Education, therefore, separated from religion, whatever the intention or pretence may be, must also be an education without morality; and God, the great teacher, whose Word at once furnishes the lessons he teaches, and records his manner of teaching them, unites or mingles them both together. He is seen training those who sit at his feet to the knowledge and love of both; and never, in any manner, signifying that they are different and separate things, but forming their characters upon the one and the other at the same time. While he does this, he also makes it sufficiently plain, that what is commonly called religion, as distinguished from morality, is set by him in the *first and highest place*—that He is first to be known, loved, and served. He teaches men to know and love him, and then shows them what he would have them to do.

Should it be thought desirable to have before the mind a perfect specimen of this *essential union* between truth and duty, we would point to the person and the life of Christ. He is the Son of God, and the Son of man. First, Son of God, then also Son of man—God in man—the very substance, sum, centre, pattern, and formation of religion and morals—at once, and alike, object and subject of both—“the brightness of the Father’s glory, and the express image of his person;” and also the brightness of man’s derived glory, and the perfection of man’s nature. In him are found and seen all religion and morality indissolubly united.

The moral character of Christ obviously consisted in his being the Practical Truth—turning all his doctrines into holy sentiments and actions. His whole conduct was obedience, proceeding from love in his heart to the law and commandments of God. That law he magnified and made honourable, and bound it authoritatively by love and gratitude on all his disciples. His life was pure religion in full and constant activity—activity directed by the divine will, and animated by desire of promoting the divine glory. He did not separate the intellect from the heart, or truth from duty, or one kind of duty from another, or conduct from principles and motives. He did not make religion a substitute for morals, or morals a substitute for religion. He neither overlooked nor despised any truth or commandment of God. Even the death to which he submitted, to make atone-

ment for sin, to teach the grandest doctrinal facts, to lay the foundation for firmest faith and trust, and to be a stupendous testimony to men of God's abhorrence of sin and love to sinners, was, at the same time, a voluntary act of the purest obedience. It was the completion and the crown of his divinely perfect morality. His life was his own, to dispose of as he pleased. He had, therefore, what no other ever had—a power or authority "to lay it down and to take it again;" but he would lay it down and take it again *only in obedience* to the Father, whose servant he had chosen and engaged to become, and whose law was the delight of his heart. "This commandment," said he, "have I received of my Father." (John x. 18.)

CHAPTER II.

LAW.

AN intelligent mind contemplating the Creation, cannot but see that it is intended by the Creator to answer some great end, worthy of him; for which end it is adapted, and to which it is always manifestly leading. All things are seen bound to their effects and to their uses, whether in comparison with each other they be great or small, animate or inanimate, rational or irrational. Every thing answers some determinate purpose; and this it can do only by constant force of Law.

SECTION I.

SUPREME LAW.

This positive linking of all things to their uses and ends is nothing else than the chain of divine inten-

tions and decrees, and the course of the divine operations and providence. This is Law, and we call it *Supreme*, because it both regulates and controls all things, and is the expressed and irresistible will of Him who “created all things,” “by whom all things consist,” and whose glory all things must ultimately subserve.

SECTION II

UNIVERSAL LAW.

This law is *Universal*, embracing every creature, every action, and every event, through all time, and even in eternity; for all creatures are most obviously under influences from without themselves, and shed more or less an influence on what surrounds or succeeds. This influence, received or emitted, is nothing else than the law which connects special causes with their special effects, and the whole system of causes and effects with the great end of the creation and providence of God. Every thing, and every part of every thing, is therefore subject to this law, and is made to contribute its share to the one grand result. No particle of matter, or the most insignificant living thing, no apparently trivial event, can possibly be re-

garded as left out of the great domain of this law. By its ordinations they all have their places and their uses, and form the parts of that vast kingdom which God regulates and controls by his all-pervading will and his constant superintendence; and thus, all *events* whatsoever are really the *acts* of Jehovah.

SECTION III.

LAW PERFECT.

This law is also *Perfect*, proceeding as it does from the all-perfect God. Its perfection consists in this, that it embraces all things, is in harmony with all things, with all their relations, and with the character of God; that it takes care that nothing shall be found independent, useless, or injurious; that it is the sole rule of that transcendent movement which we call God's Providence and government of the universe; and that its principles, being the volitions of God, never vary, nor change.

Creation and Law, therefore, spring from the same source, have the same compass, are characterized by the same excellence, and have the same great end.

Intelligent creatures that are Free may seek to

break loose from it, but they can no more accomplish their wish than they can get out of the bounds of creation ; for, in their endeavour to escape one law, they inevitably feel the resistance and control, or even the vengeance, of another ; so that yield they must, however reluctantly, to divine law, which is really necessity. Apostate angels and fallen men are proofs, that beyond the law and government of God they cannot flee—that they have only removed from one quarter to another of its infinity, eternity, omnipotence, and righteousness.

SECTION IV.

LAWS OF NATURE.

Not laws of things themselves, but laws of God ; and are adapted to the Natures he has given to his Creatures.

Though what are called Laws of Nature seem to be inherent in, and therefore to belong to, the things themselves which God has made ; and though they appear to arise spontaneously out of the relations in which he has placed them to each other, yet it is impossible that they can be any other than the accomplishment of the will of God. Assuredly it is but the care and

the constancy of their operations, in other words, the perfection of the power that moves and guides them, which makes them seem to be self-moved and self-guided: even as in a well-ordered house or family, all the harmonious movement appears to an observer to be the effect of the innate spontaneous action of each individual member; the wisdom and will of its head are scarcely ever seen, and the loud voice of command never heard proclaiming his sovereignty, except when a member of the house has broken or disturbed the peaceful order.

These things cannot, without the greatest violence to all reason, be regarded as their own lawgivers, since they did not make themselves, and since none of them is absolute and supreme.

The Laws of Nature, then, are properly and positively the Laws of God. It is He who ordains a place for the sun, who gives being and law to his light, and who, in the language of Scripture, makes him to know his rising and his setting. It is He who sets bounds to the sea—who makes the grass to grow, and the herb to spring—who makes the fire, the hail, the snow, the vapours, and the stormy wind, to fulfil his word. (Ps. cxlviii.) Without his law none of these could answer its end. It could neither know, nor by any chance or change be made certainly to reach, its proper destination.

The laws of Nature or of God, being by his wisdom framed to suit the varied natures, places, and purposes, of his creatures, those of them that relate to

intelligent and responsible agents, are, by one means or other, made known to be the *divine* will or law; and this, because he has given to these creatures a capacity of intelligently and willingly obeying him. Even in innocence the law of man's affections and conduct did not, and could not, arise from his own mind, as from its original seat and throne, but came to him from the will and throne of God. His innocence made him desire the knowledge of God's will. Sovereign goodness declared it, and the same innocence delighted to receive and obey. Had it been otherwise—had man in that state done what he pleased, without reference to the will of his Maker—even though what he did was in the matter of it right and proper, it could not have been right or proper in him to do it *on that account*. He would not have been obedient, but guilty of an assumption of the divine prerogative, by acting as a God or law-giver to himself. Even the holiest “angels that excel in strength,” act not from mere spontaneity, but do God's “commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.” (Ps. ciii.)

It is true, that while the inanimate or brute creatures move and act according to laws which they know not, and, therefore, cannot transgress, intelligent and rational creatures have the power, though not the right, of disregarding or opposing the will of God. They can transgress his law, and many of them have used, and still use, this power against the giver of it. They have such a power and liberty,

we say, given to them, by him who made them; but none have had, and none can have, the *right* to disobey him.

SECTION V.

POWER AND RIGHT TO MAKE LAWS.

Exist only in God, and in those to whom he gives them—These are limited by God—Neither absolute will nor expediency permitted to Men in framing Law—Power and right of Human Legislators.

Power and right are equal and identical only in the all-perfect One in whom they eternally reside. “The glory” of this prerogative “he will not give to another.” Delegated, communicated power must be responsible, and God’s power and right alike arm his justice to resist and punish all abuse of power in any of his creatures, whether angels or men; abuse of power being nothing else than resistance to God’s will and righteous law—nothing else than rebellion and sin—nothing else than a manifest wrong, for which there can be no apology or vindication.

And as man has no right to make supreme laws for himself, but is bound to learn and obey those of

his Creator; so neither can he have the right to make laws for other creatures, without profoundest respect had to the will and law of God. And if there be, as there undoubtedly is, allowed by God a sphere within which men may make laws for their fellow-creatures, that sphere is by no means marked out, and placed beyond the dominion of God, so as that any law which they may please to enact may there have right and authority. Whatever by men is enacted, in such a sphere, must, in its principles, its ends, and its obligations, be derived from the laws which God has established—must be in harmony with them; and must, therefore, be merely adaptations and applications to the ever-varying circumstances of the creatures of what has originally proceeded from God. For lawgivers among men can never, especially in a matter so important, be supposed to be set free, and that by God himself, from the superintendence and direction of his supreme will; and if, in any respect, or to the smallest extent, they were so set free, they would, in so far, not be responsible for the most important acts, affecting widely and deeply the whole society over which they preside. Laws of men would, in that case, be withdrawn from the kingdom of God, and of his providence; or if they were to be regarded as admissible and receiving the divine sanction, then this absurdity would follow, that men might become lawgivers to their Maker, and that, too, by his own consent, which would, indeed, be the most monstrous

of all instances of an “imperium in imperio”—a thing which the Supreme will never suffer to exist in his universe.

It scarcely requires any reference to the statute-book of Heaven, to be satisfied that the doctrine now under consideration has no warrant there. In Ps. lxxxii., lawgivers and judges, called “gods,” are informed that “God standeth in their congregation and judgeth among them;” *i. e.*, he brings in his laws among them, to bind them, and pronounces his judgments on theirs. There can, therefore, be no question as to the duty of lawgivers and judges in such matters. They are obviously bound to consult the supreme Lawgiver and Judge, both before they begin, and while they proceed. They are compelled to this by all the obligations which can bind intelligent creatures to God, in all parts of their conduct, public as well as private. Neither their absolute will, nor any views they may entertain of expediency, can be held as a substitute for, or entitled to stand in the same place with, divine wisdom and law. Jehovah is the God of these gods, and therefore ought, as such, to be consulted by them. He is the “blessed and only Potentate, the King of these kings, and Lord of *these* lords.”

This obedience of lawgivers to God is unquestionably the highest, or rather, is the only true EXPEDIENCY. For is it not plain and obvious, that were they, in framing laws and exercising government, to act on their own views of expediency, they would

require, first of all, to make sure that the ends they contemplate will not be frustrated by the Almighty, whom they disregard, and next, to establish their own claim to omniscience ; since the only true expediency consists in pursuing that course which agrees with the will of God, with all the interests of all things, and with the whole extent and duration of universal well-being ? True expediency overlooks, injures no person, and no interest. If it did, it would lose both its name and nature. It is, therefore, only another name for doing the will of God. Who but He can know and determine that which is right and fit throughout ? And what, but obedience to his will, in the actings of a limited and fallible creature, can properly be said to be in harmony with all that is good ?

To recognise, adapt, and carry out divine law, in the manner referred to, would, therefore, seem to be all the right which human legislators, as such, can possess, and all the duty they have to perform. When they keep within these bounds, and show to all men that this is what they do, then they send forth their laws with the divine sanction, give to them over the minds of others the force of their own example of reverence for the Supreme, and place them under the approving guardian care of Him by whom kings reign and princes decree justice—even of Him who bears such a love to judgment and to righteousness, that he will assuredly give his testimony to the world, that such laws have his approbation, in the

prosperity with which he will always cause them to be attended.

SECTION VI.

CREATURES THE MEDIA OF LAW.

Oversight or Perversion of this Fact—Scepticism and Credulity—Revelation and Nature accord in their testimony on this subject.

Every creature of God, we remark further, is not only a *subject* of law, but is, at the same time, an *INSTRUMENT* for carrying it into execution, and a *MEDIUM* through which it reaches and affects other creatures. Thus, the sun is itself under law, and by obeying it, he helps to keep the planets in their orbits, and to regulate them in all their sublime and beneficent motions. The winds obey the impulse of the Almighty when they rise and roar ; but they also serve to support and bear along the shady and fertilizing clouds. A parent yields to the law of nature, when he loves his children ; but he also becomes the means of nourishing, instructing, and ruling them. The character of a Christian is not only formed by obedience to the will of Christ, but it becomes also

an influential example or secondary law, to shed happy influences on all around him.

It is the ignorance or denial of this truth that makes many men feel and act as if God had nothing to do with the government of the world. They see the various instruments and media of the divine will, it may be, thinking, willing, and acting, and hence they conclude that these are the sources and originals of all that of which they are only the expression and the instrumentality: and so they either become blind Atheists, seeing no divine will, or intention, or wisdom, in such arrangements, or they land themselves amidst the mazes and fictions of an equally stupid Pantheism. Losing all notion of a supreme intelligent Power, they either deny that there is a God at all; or, which is much the same thing, they make every thing a god; which is an utter confounding of all thought and reason. Denying the faith, they thus run into the most enormous credulity, regarding and speaking of things that begin, and change, and end, as if they were infinite, eternal, and unchangeable; or mistaking for God things that are born, that are dependent, and that die—nay, even things utterly blind and insensate. How much easier is it for reason to embrace the notion of one only living and true God, who created all things, and gives law to them, than to be thus bewildered and confounded in the anomaly of a world not made nor ruled, or only made and ruled by chance or nothing, which is plainly absurd, and utterly incredible!

It scarcely needs to be stated, that this is the view which the Scriptures give. From first to last, they declare that “the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand”—that “he doeth according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of this earth.” They represent him as different from all things, and before all things, and above all things, making his will operative upon them, and by means of them. These Scriptures declare that they are themselves his written words—revealing all needful truth, and prescribing the duty belonging to all states and relationships of life. The very doctrines which they teach, coming as they do from God, and with the force of law on men’s understanding and judgment, bind us to believe them. The provisions of grace which they make known for our necessities, include an obligation on us to receive them. The promises and threatenings which they address to us are intended to be laws to our hopes and fears; and the judgments on men’s actions which they pronounce or record, give law to our judgments; so that we are bound at once to approve and to imitate their righteousness and their mercifulness.

And since these Scriptures, which are the word of God, embrace all religious and moral truth, all religious and moral law, every man is obliged to consult them, and to carry out their principles into all the details of his personal, social, and religious life. They form, as it were, one grand, varied, all-comprehending, authoritative rule for the whole world, and

lay all men under the strongest obligations to read, receive, obey, and imitate.

He who studies what is commonly called the law of nature, in as far as he truly discovers it, finds there what is really the law of God—nature being nothing else than the work of God. Should he also investigate, as he certainly ought to do, the law of revelation, he will find that both the one and the other, in so far as they are respectively manifestations of their Author, teach the same things. They perfectly coincide and harmonize with each other, because they proceed from the same infinitely consistent mind and will.

SECTION VII.

SUPERIORITY OF REVELATION TO NATURE.

*In Extent and Clearness—In Repairing Disorders—
In Simplicity—In Quickening Power.*

There are several reasons why we should give a preference to revelation over nature in this respect.

1. Because revelation is more extended, clear, and certain in its light than nature. It may be regarded as its republication, confirmation, and sup-

plement, and as a divine commentary upon the first, and now, to us, greatly obscured and unredeeming work of God.

2. Because it contains provisions and laws for repairing the disorders and ruin brought into the universe by sin; of which, though it be most important to fallen man, nature says nothing.

3. Because of that excellent simplicity which belongs to it. It is capable of being read and understood, and its authority of being felt by all minds, even the simplest and least educated. Who may not see, that if the human race were now left to gather the knowledge of the divine will from what we call nature, the vast majority of men would never be able to come to the understanding of even its primary elements?

Natural law is indeed prepared to speak much; but it can find no fit, intelligent audience, till revelation has first arrested and instructed them. When she has done this, then men begin to hear nature re-echoing and repeating what revelation has taught, and learn that it is the same God who utters his mind and will by both the one and the other, and who makes the one illustrate and establish the other. Then the heavens are heard declaring "the glory of the Lord, and the firmament is seen showing forth his handywork. Then day is heard uttering speech to day, and night teaching knowledge unto night." (Ps. xix.) In that Psalm, part of which we have just quoted, we have, in beautiful language, the whole

doctrine of nature and revelation, and the superiority of the one to the other divinely set forth.

SECTION VIII.

REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS.

Their Justice and Righteousness—Postponements and Remissions of Punishment combined with Justice—Law of Mitigations of Punishment.

It is, moreover, the province and business of law, without which, indeed, it could not answer its end, to prescribe REWARDS for obedience, and PUNISHMENTS for disobedience. This necessary part and accompaniment of it comes with striking clearness from the supreme Lawgiver. The nature and measure of the rewards and punishments prescribed by him, are of necessity characterized by the same righteousness which belongs to the statutes themselves. They must be held as not only requisite to give law its effect, but as also furnishing specimens to the world, on the one hand, of what the observance, and on the other, of what the transgression, of them righteously deserves.

When God, therefore, executes his will, and brings upon those who are under it what he has

announced, he is setting before the world his justice, and an example to human governments, which they are bound, and which it would be wisdom in them, to follow. This holds true throughout; for though, in the administration of God, as connected with his grace, there are postponements, and even remissions of penalties, yet these very forbearances are, as has just been hinted, regulated by a law of righteousness as well as of mercy, and must therefore be likewise viewed as laws and models for human governments to follow.

It should seem that, when the speedy infliction of punishment for every transgression would, by that transgression becoming universal, utterly extirpate a whole nation or the whole world, then God institutes a law, according to which, he may be just without executing the sentence of justice in its utmost rigour, at the instant. Thus among the Jews, for example, the breach of the law of the Sabbath was, by God's appointment, punishable with death, and therefore justly so punishable; yet only one instance is recorded of its having been actually inflicted. Thus there was not only the enactment of a just law with a just punishment, but also a specimen of its execution standing before that nation, and as it were at the head of its history, for its own and the world's benefit. Yet, had the same punishment been actually made to fall immediately on all similar transgressors, the whole nation, in the times of its universal defections, must have been cut off. The strictly just

punishment for the breach of this law, was therefore, by divine authority, mitigated or relaxed, as we find in the times of Nehemiah (chapter xiii. 15–21.) The law of sacrifices and atonements for transgression had the same end in view.

Thus the people had before their faces, and over their heads, a law which justly condemned, and yet averted punishment; and so they could contemplate in union the awful justice, and the holy pity and tender mercies, of their God. How glorious must the moral effects of all this on their minds have been !

SECTION IX.

ABSOLUTE OBLIGATIONS OF DIVINE LAW.

Authority of God, and not Conscience, binds Men.

The obligations, however, of all divine law are *absolute*, and cannot by any possibility be justly evaded. They are laid by God upon every man—they constrain his moral nature to utter a solemn approving response at once to the law and to its penalty. And here lies the proper province of Conscience, for its legitimate exercise is nothing else than a practical response of man's soul within to divine law and jus-

tice without. Hence it is that, not conscience, but the law of God, is to us the rule of judging. It is no vindication of a man in aught that he believes or does, that he is able to appeal to his conscience. That is not the law, or the lawgiver, or the supreme judge. God and his will are all these.

Were it supposed to be otherwise—were conscience to be held as occupying the highest place, and its decisions as just and final and vindictory—then it would follow,

1. That man is his own supreme lawgiver, and is the final judge of himself; and,
2. That there is no perfect, uniform rule of duty in the world.

We conclude, therefore, that the office of this faculty is simply to repeat approvingly in the soul the law of God—to justify or condemn, to reward or punish, as the Divine Majesty wills and enacts. Man's first duty, therefore, is to inquire into that law of truth and falsehood, of right and wrong, which comes from God, and which instructs and binds both himself and his conscience. It is in this way only we can perceive how conscience can both duly perform its proper functions, and be itself right with God.

Referring, as we may here do, to the composition of the term “conscience,” it seems to be *a knowing of duty, as God knows it*—a harmony with God in judging actions—a consenting with him to his law, that it is holy, and just, and good. It is a judging

along with him, and approving and condemning as he approves and condemns. We need not surely remark, that it may cease to perform aright its proper work, and become corrupt and perverted ; which is the same thing as to affirm that man himself may become ignorant, depraved, and opposed to God. It is a mournful truth, that conscience has often approved what God has condemned, and condemned what he has approved: and whenever that has been the case, God has been right, and conscience has been wrong ; for no man can be justified before God, on the plea that he judged or acted conscientiously, since nothing in us, or done by us, can deprive God of any right which belongs essentially to him; especially the right of supremacy in judging all actions and all men. Conscience can in no case be permitted to dethrone the eternal King, to supersede the sovereign Judge, or become to us the infallible God.

CHAPTER III.

GOVERNMENT.

God the fountain of all Government—Nature of Government—Its character, and end.

As God is the fountain of all law, so is he also of all GOVERNMENT. He himself tells us that he is “the Governor among the nations;” that “whatsoever pleaseth the Lord, that he doeth” (Ps. cxxxv. 6); that “he rules in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of this earth; and that none can stay his hand from working.”

The *nature* of government is nothing else than the carrying out of laws into their operation, and onward to their effects, by a sufficient power. It is the application of law to our own and others’ conduct and condition. It is the actual keeping of all things in their order and motions, so as to insure the realization of their proper uses and ends.

Righteous government, is the conducting of all these things by *righteous law*, emanating from the

rightful and from a righteous lawgiver; *good* government, is the conducting of them by *good laws*; and a *perfect* government, is the *perfect* conducting of all according to a *perfect law*.

The government of God must, therefore, be righteous, good, and perfect, inasmuch as it is carried on by him according to laws of his, which are all “holy, and just, and good.”

This government extends to all creatures and events, small and great. It embraces all their conduct, all their interests, and all their necessities, making them all, in point of fact, to answer the high and irresistible ordinations of his will, bringing all things round, at the close, to stand together and shine before the universe as an eternal display and monument of his most glorious perfection. It will make the everlasting condition of his creatures, whatever that may be, a loud-sounding, solemn hymn of praise to Jehovah, who shall “rejoice in his works.”
(Ps. civ. 31.)

SECTION I.

OPERATION OF DIVINE LAW CONSTITUTES PROVIDENCE.

Proofs of a Providence—It is General and Particular—Is not the operation of Natural Laws—The steadfastness of God's Laws gives rise to a comprehensive History of them—This History found in the Scriptures.

The OPERATION OF DIVINE LAW in the government of the world constitutes what is called PROVIDENCE, or God's care and management of the universe, regulated by his own will and good pleasure.

That there is such providence none but a purblind Atheist will deny. Every sentient creature feels that it is dependent, and is so restrained, as that it is never able to do all that it might attempt, to gain all it might desire, or to escape from all it might desire to shun. It is free, and yet bound. What could keep such multitudes and varieties of creatures as exist, and put forth such contrary efforts, and this, as it were, in the same habitation, from fierce conflict and speedy ruin, were there no governing power and care over them all? What would

befall a family of a few individuals, for example, over whom there is no head or ruler, who are under no care or control of father, or mother, or elder brother, or guardian? And shall the universe be thought to stand less in need of superintendence than they?

As it is God who made, so it is he who preserves and governs all. The creation is the only kingdom of Him who ruleth over all. “On Him the eyes of all creatures wait. That which He giveth them they gather. He opens his hand; they are filled with good.”

Thus his providence is both *general* and *particular*, embracing at once the whole and each individual component part—all generals being made up of particulars, and the government or providence of all being but the extension to all of a care similar to that which is bestowed on each and every part. There is, for example, and can be no other way of providing for a nation, but that of providing for every individual man and woman. Let any or every part be neglected, and then the whole will speedily run to ruin. Hence it is, that “not even a sparrow can fall to the ground without our Father,” and that “God feeds the ravens, and clothes the lilies of the field.”

To speak of God governing the world *by general laws*, as if he had set up ordinations and powers separate from his incessant care, and, after their appointment, had made them independent of it, thus committing all things to *them*, relieving himself as it were from further trouble, is really to affirm what has

no meaning—what is obviously absurd and impious. For what is a law in itself, but a name for the will, the power, and the regular acting, of an intelligent being? A law in a statute-book is nothing but a dead record of the living will of the lawgiver; and has no operation apart from his will, or from the will of those who execute it, as the dictate of the supreme authority. A law of material things is neither *their* intelligence nor will. It is nothing more, and nothing else, than the regular action of their Creator upon, and by means of, those very things. They are merely the subjects and instruments of law. They have no will, and therefore no action in and of themselves. They cannot, as powers, govern either themselves, or those things which we speak of as under their influence. In other words, it is not the law, but the Lawgiver, that does what is done; and law is nothing more than his method of doing it. The world, therefore, is cared for and governed, not by general laws, but by the will, the wisdom, and the power of God; whose constancy of mind and will, taken along with his invisible nature, makes all seem to us as if it moved spontaneously, and by a power entirely its own. A watch moves of its own accord, as we would say; but does it not really move in consequence of the skill and purpose of the maker, taking advantage of the constant action of the Deity, in what we call the elastic power of particular substances placed in certain positions?

Laws, we say, then, are dead, and no effects are properly due to their influence or power. All effects are owing to a living, intelligent, governing Spirit.

Let there be conceived a world in which there are no powers, except those things called laws, and most assuredly it would cease to answer any wise or great end; and this simply because it would cease to act at all, or rather would cease to be. There would be no central, operative, controlling volitions, moving and guiding the whole; and since laws are but modes of acting, these laws themselves would cease to exist, or rather never could have existed, there being no active power to which, as modes of action, they ever could have been attached.

The visible connection of causes, means, and effects, and the history of these same things, have made known to *intelligent creatures* the governing power of God as a grand and visible fact;—and since his laws are manifestly *stedfast* and *unalterable*, it must follow, that if he carries on this his government for a sufficient lapse of years and generations, and gives, or causes to be given, a true description, a full and accurate history of that government, then the observer, if he live sufficiently long, or the reader of that history, will have the means of becoming acquainted with the principles, the laws, and the character of this government or providence of God.

In the Sacred Scriptures, we have such a *history* stretching over a period of no less than 4,500 years, during all which time the divine government was carried on, on the same principles as those which will guide it to the end. God himself, by men whom he inspired, has written the annals of his reign; and has furnished an infallibly accurate account of the events, the nature, and character of his providence. It embraces individuals, families, nations, and the world—men in innocence and in guilt, in happiness and in misery—men ignorant of him, and men to whom he made himself known—men under a broken covenant, and men to whom he made known the covenant of his mercy—men ignorant of his laws, and men acquainted with them—men under the new covenant, at one time false and disobedient, and at another obedient and faithful—men, in a word, of all characters, states, and relationships, in which they can ever exist. Thus we have in the Scriptures a grand epitome in history, and in proof, of all that God has done in the world, and of all he will ever do.

SECTION II.

PROVIDENTIAL HISTORY OF THE JEWS.

Intended for the Instruction of all to whom Revelation is given—Ought to be profoundly studied by Statesmen.

In this Record, there stands prominently forward God's government of *a particular nation*, to which he had made known the true religion, and which professed to have received it at his hands. Among them, He ordered to be set up all needful institutions, both civil and sacred; and conducted the affairs of his government over them in connection with their privileges and obligations. That nation, from first to last, passed through all possible states of obedience and disobedience, and through all possible varieties of prosperity and adversity which can befall any nation. And, as we have already shown, since the principles of God's government can never change, his whole administration of the affairs of the Jews must, at the same time, be regarded as an exhibition to the world of what he will do to any, to every, nation to which he has

given his eternal word. It must be held as a specimen of his government, and intended for the instruction of all nations to whom his revelation is sent.

The Old Testament, therefore, which contains more particularly that history, ought to be the special study of all legislators and statesmen, who may rest assured that that book unfolds the principles, and records the results, of the Supreme Wisdom conducting the grand model government over the nations. It contains, unquestionably, the system of politics approved of and appointed by God; and is the source out of which the politicians of this world ought to draw both their rules and their precedents. For it cannot be conceived, that a revelation to man of all that it concerns him to know, should not furnish the necessary instructions on a subject like this, so deeply important to the welfare and happiness of the world; or, that the supreme moral Governor should give no intimations in his oracles on a subject which constitutes one of the highest departments, both of religion and morality. To suppose for a moment that nations taught to worship God, are not told by him how their affairs ought to be conducted, or how the providence of God is to be conducted towards them, would be to suppose that God cared only for individuals, and not for vast and political societies of men; and that he had left the most difficult and important questions to be solved, and some of the most arduous

duties to be performed, without any guidance from him whatever.

And since the Scriptures afford so illustrious an example of a State under the positive and recognised care of God; and since no other such example is anywhere to be found, we must conclude that that example was intended for the special uses of which we have spoken.

SECTION III.

THE THEOCRACY OF THE JEWISH POLITY.

Is no valid Objection to its being of Universal Application—Christian nations no less under a Theocracy than the Jews—Objections considered.

It is objected, indeed, to such an application of that history, that the people of the Jews were under a THEOCRACY—an altogether peculiar government of God, under which no other nation ever was or shall be; that, in other words, they had an altogether miraculous government or dispensation. We

grant they were under a theocracy—that they had their laws from, and were under the positive providence and government of, God—that they were prosperous or otherwise, as they maintained or discontinued their loyalty and obedience to the Eternal King. But if the expression, Theocracy of the Jews, be meant to convey the idea that *other* nations, to which God communicates his law, are not bound to receive it, and are not under a providence conducted on the same principles, and after the same general manner, then we utterly deny it. We do, indeed, hold that the Jews were under a Theocracy; but so also are all baptized nations. They are as truly taught of God, and as firmly bound to serve him, as the Jews ever were. They have, at least, as great advantages for knowing his will and for doing it as the Jews ever had; and it is difficult even to imagine how Christianity could ever relax the obedience of nations, or remove farther away from them the eye and the hand of that providence which so intimately superintended the affairs of the Jews. “Is he the God of the Jews only, and not of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also,” who have a greater abundance of his oracles and law than the Jews, before the coming of Christ, ever enjoyed.

Besides, it must not be overlooked, that God’s government of the Jewish nation was carried on by the usual and visible instrumentality of *human government*. All the orders of men were employed,

as agents in his government of the people, which have ever been employed in any civilized and well-ordered state. There was among them a written statute-book of primary essential law. There were successions of supreme rulers. There were judges, priests, ministers of religion, prophets, teachers of the law, schools, places of worship, &c. God never was their King, in the sense of appearing in person, sitting on a throne in the midst of them, and dispensing with the usual agents and instruments of government. So far was this from being the case, that all the while God was their King, the people had *complete forms* of government, in which they took part, and which they could, and did, change at their pleasure. At one time, they were ruled by a military chief, as Joshua; at another, by judges; at another, by a pontificate, as Samuel; again, by an elective monarchy, as under Saul; and afterwards, by a hereditary monarchy, from David down to the time of the captivity in Babylon, &c. But whatever form the supreme magistracy assumed, the law by which it was to be guided was still the same. Sometimes, indeed, nay, very often, they rebelled against God, and set aside his law and worship; in which cases, He in his providence visited them with judgments and disasters, which came on them, so far as man could see, in the accustomed way of war, or famine, or pestilence, as they still do among modern nations.

It may be objected, that the Jews had the Shechi-

nah, the Oracle, prophets, &c., to consult, which no other nation ever had, or can again expect. It is answered, that Christian nations have the real Shechinah—the true Urim and Thummim—the whole word of God or of Christ, speaking most clearly, wherever he is consulted, on any matter which it really concerns an individual or a nation to know. They have in *one book*, of easiest access, all the oracles, all the writings of their prophets, all the divine hymns, and all the wisdom of God which the Jews ever had. They have them as near at hand, spoken in as plain a language, accompanied with as much solemn and impressive grandeur, verified by as many instances of performance, and assigning as clearly the reasons for the providential acts of the same God. In fine, what did the Jews of old know of God and of his government, that we, under the full light of the gospel, have not the means of knowing greatly better than they?

It is true that this people were planted at first in their land, and constituted an independent, organized community, by a providence which caused stupendous miracles to be wrought at once for their deliverance out of bondage, and for impressing their minds most deeply, and that at the very beginning, with the majesty, perfection, presence, and favour of their God. But after that solemn initial period was past, few, and at length no miracles, properly so called, were wrought among them. This, at least, must be confessed as true, that there was no *system of miracles*,

strictly so called, employed in their regular government. So evident is this, that we are confident that had a mere human philosophical historian written their history, he would seldom have found it necessary, on his principles, to take notice of the interposition of God at all. He would, indeed, have had very remarkable events to record, as all historians always have; but these events and their causes, in every material sense, would have appeared to him to be precisely similar to those that operate and take place throughout the whole world. Certainly he would have ascribed to natural causes multitudes of things which the sacred historians ascribed to Jehovah, or to his angels. We must never forget, that because the actual history of that people was written by men inspired of God, and who therefore declared what high reasons of state God had for his providential treatment of them, therefore the Divinity only appears to have taken a more intimate care of them than he has since done of Christian nations. It is the theology in the sacred history, we apprehend, which has led so many into the belief that the whole system of Jewish affairs was pervaded by miraculous interferences of their God, who interferes no more after this manner with the affairs of nations. We can have no reason to doubt that, if inspired men were to view and record the events which pass in the world even at this day, they would introduce God as having to do with them all, and connect every one of them with his administration of supreme justice and goodness.

They would produce a history apparently not a little miraculous; and on this very account, that it would all be made to turn on the will and operations of Him who is the great first cause of all things, "and worketh all in all."

The Jews had, indeed, inspired Prophets, whom God raised up and sent to them from time to time. But their chief mission was not to govern, but solemnly to declare to the people their transgressions of the divine law, and to assure them that the threatenings for the transgression of it would be executed, unless they truly repented. These prophets also foretold many future events; but this they did not so much for the purpose of directing or influencing the affairs of government at the time, as for leading forth the people's minds to contemplate what should befall in distant ages, in order that they might gather good from the future as from the past; and furnishing also to the men of those future ages, so soon as they should arrive, additional proofs that the God of Israel was the God of the whole earth, knowing and ruling all things throughout all generations.

Now, Christian nations have the benefit of the writings both of the sacred historians and of these divinely-commissioned prophets. They have them to read, and may be taught by them as fully and appropriately as the Jews were ever taught. They are favoured with the very same instructions and warnings; for all that is there recorded is preserved

and told to the whole human race. It surely matters little whether we hear prophets speak, or only read what they have spoken. If there be a difference, it is that what is written has many advantages over what is merely spoken. In reading, we are much less liable to form or retain mistakes as to the meaning. We can, as it were, hear the things repeated as often as we please, and can compare them with one another, with the law, and with all preceding and succeeding history.

Christian nations have therefore the law, the oracles, the miracles, the prophets, the historians, the Messiah, the evangelists, and the apostles, in as true a sense as the Jews; or rather, they have the same divine instructors and instructions gathered into one place, and all of them accessible at any time to all. There never will be, to the end of time, any further revelation, any new or better laws from God to man, or any other principles or modes of the divine government over individuals or nations, than those detailed or foretold in the Scriptures of truth.

SECTION IV.

HUMAN GOVERNMENTS.

Instruments of Divine Government—Their first duty is to study the Divine Revelation—They are not at liberty to follow their own Fancies—The Divine Law and Government capable of being understood by them.

One of the instruments which God employs among men for carrying his law into execution, is HUMAN GOVERNMENT, of which one of the highest functions is to be the minister of God, and of those detailed applications of his law which are of divine warrant, and necessary to carry into effect the divine will.

The very first duty of a human government, therefore, is to take counsel of God, to attend to the divine plan, to study its principles, to admire its operations, to imitate its procedure, and, as a humble instrument, to prosecute the same high ends. It should be most careful to avoid every thing which could place it in opposition to the Omnipotent, and most anxious to secure to itself the favour of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his will, and who is the judge of all governments. It never can be right or safe for it to act otherwise. In this way only can it expect to

have God approving and crowning its efforts. Following a course of obedience and imitation, it ought to rest assured of his approval and co-operation, of being blessed and made a blessing by him, and of having in the end the highest possible testimonies given to it by the glorious results to which it shall be seen to have led. The most ample and accessible means for such obedience and imitation, as well as the strongest inducements to pursue such a course, are furnished to all governments in the Holy Scriptures.

Governments which have the Sacred Volume in their hands, ought not to feel that they have been left without divine guidance in their arduous and most important work. That book is as full of all principles, rules, and examples of government for *their* benefit, as it is of doctrines, precepts, and examples for the regulation of the faith and life of a private Christian. It provides for them a large amount of most striking precedents to follow or to shun. It records most affecting and appropriate instances of the good and bad effects of the right and wrong action of human governments, and it marks out and defines to them their special departments of duty, by setting before them those things which God committed to the charge of human government among the Jews. The divisions and extent of their powers, the manner in which they should exercise them, the means they should employ, the objects they should contemplate, the institutions they should set up, the way of supporting and applying these institutions,

and the consequences that may be expected to follow, may all be easily traced, and ought to be studied, in that great storehouse and model.

If there is any right or power in human governments to alter or modify the things they find in that book, they ought to make sure that such right is conceded and recognised there. In other words, it becomes them to establish their right to this power by an appeal to the authority of God himself, from whom all rights and liberties in law proceed. They ought to observe the nature of the alterations and modifications which that polity itself, agreeably to the divine will, underwent, during its progress from its original institution by Moses and Joshua, down to the close of its history.

To suppose that human governments are left by God at liberty to follow their own fancy, to depend entirely or chiefly on their own wisdom, to act on a right to do as they please, or to conceive that they are entitled to exercise rule, according to the caprice of despotism, or the shifts of expediency, or the fickle passions of a multitude, would be to maintain that what requires the highest reason, the firmest foundations, the greatest constancy, and the noblest imitation of the divine power, is committed like a vessel to the sea without pilot, without helm, and without compass to guide it—first the sport, and then the wreck of winds and waves. There cannot be a greater solecism than for a Christian to believe that the laws of Solon, the Republic of Plato, the Politics of Aristotle, the Tables

of Numa Pompilius, the Pandects of Justinian, or any mere human system of legislation or government, can be equal, in any respect, to the institutes of law prescribed, and the actual government conducted by, the all-wise God ; or that a history of the government of any nation can be found so full and correct, or so useful in highest instruction on this subject, as that of the Jews. That history shows at once the happy effects of a wise and firm adherence to just and holy law, and the miserable fruits to the governors and to the nation, of their unwarrantable departure from it. It cannot fail to be seen there how the providence of God so ordered it, that governments which honoured him by obeying his laws, gained also the good esteem, and secured the general, cheerful obedience of the people whom they ruled ; while, on the other hand, their defections from God and his law quickly led to a like defection on the part of the people, both from God and from them. The ruin of the whole state was the sure and almost immediate consequence.

Should the *difficulty of understanding* the sacred economy of the Jews, and of applying the principles of it to modern nations and governments, appear as an insuperable objection to making an attempt of this kind, it is answered,—

1. That the whole subject of government, in whatever way studied, is, in every instance and respect, difficult to be understood and applied.
2. That the application of all laws, ancient or

modern, to the business of government, requires great abilities and much study.

3. That the laws and government of Israel are as little perplexed, or may at least be as easily understood, as those of any nation with which we are acquainted.

4. That the Jewish law and government are adapted to the universal and unchangeable necessities of human nature by Him who knows it perfectly; and therefore are now capable of being applied substantially to all states, and by all wise governments.

5. That, as we have already seen, Jehovah intended they should be of this essential use to all into whose hands his blessed Book should come.

6. That they are no more difficult to be understood by an inquiring, patient, and unprejudiced statesman, than they are by the humble disciple for his eternal salvation, and for his guidance through the perplexities of his present life.

7. That the different interpretations which have been put upon them by divines and politicians are no more to be accounted stumbling-blocks in the way, and can no more warrant us to stand aloof from them, or to set them aside, than the different interpretations given by lawgivers and judges of human statutes, would justify a man in neglecting or despising the law and government of his country.

SECTION V.

POWER AND RIGHT OF GOVERNMENT.

What these are, and whence derived—Responsibility to the Giver of them—Fall of Man an abuse of Power—Distribution of Power, &c.—How to be regulated—Rightful Authority or Power.

To government belong the POWER AND THE RIGHT to order and command all that is put under it. These two—the power and the right—must reside together in that which governs. The right binds and controls the power, and the power must proceed to the accomplishment of its ends sanctioned and, as it were, hallowed by the right.

All power, or that which can originate or produce actions and effects, whether it be creative, intellectual, moral, judicial, political, or ecclesiastical, is first and absolutely in, belongs essentially to, and flows only from, God. “There is no power but of God.” All just law is but the effect of that power, or will of God proceeding forth from him, to direct the application of whatever power he has been pleased to bestow on his creatures. In a word, he

gives all power, and at the same time a law for its use by all.

All *right*, which is nothing else than what either belongs essentially to a living being, or is put into the possession of another by will and gift of him to whom it originally belonged, resides in God; and every right of creatures must, of necessity, be derived from him. He is the sole fountain of all right, as well as of all power, and is the sovereign Lawgiver of all on whom He bestows them.

All *property*, of whatever kind or name—that is, every created thing—likewise belongs to the Creator; and over it he only has absolute and inalienable right; and right in the creature always consists in the lawful possession and just use of the power and property he has from God.

It cannot be doubted but that God *distributes* power and right to his creatures according to his good pleasure—yet so as not to denude himself, by so doing, of any, the smallest, portion of that which he gives; for God never can give gifts *away* from himself, so as to lose his property in them, or the right to give law for their use. He only *intrusts them* to the creatures, that they may be used according to his will, and in subserviency to his grand purposes regarding the universe. His creatures, to whom he has given the faculty of understanding the powers he has conferred on them, and his will respecting these powers, are therefore responsible to him for the use they make of themselves and of all that they have.

Thus angels and men have all that they are and possess placed on the basis of conscience; and one of their first duties is to ascertain, and constantly to recognise, the origin and the law of all the powers, the rights, and the properties which they possess.

The *fall of man*, in this most important view, was nothing else than the overlooking, or the resisting of all these considerations. It was an attempt to set aside this original right, and this eternal law. And the sins of men ever since have consisted in the very same abuse; for the possession or exercise of power, without law or right from God, is sin or rebellion against Him—such, for example, are usurpations and enormous acts of tyrants who seize by craft or violence—that is, by the lawless use of a power which they lawfully have—another power which does not of right belong to them, employing both the one and the other in opposition to every just claim to righteousness or mercy which God has given to those on whom they trample.

It follows, as a direct consequence, that the distribution of power, of property, and of right among men, by men themselves—a power which they have of God—must be regulated by the original rule which proceeds from God; and, therefore, that whatever distribution of these is *contrary* to that prime law, cannot bind the consciences of those whose rights, derived from the same source, it disregards or subverts. He who by human power is deprived of what God has given him, may indeed,

out of charity or love of peace, submit to the wrong, but the supreme law certainly does not compel him in conscience to submit.

It is not to physical or moral power itself, as existing in human society, but to the distribution and use of it, that human law applies; so that when we speak of lawful authority, we mean, that human law assigns it to the person to whom *God's law* as well as his providence has given it, and that it is used by that person as God directs.

It is then only that the individual who possesses it has the right from God to have it acknowledged and submitted to by those whom Providence has placed under his authority, as in the relation of a husband to his wife, of a parent to his child, of a master to his servant, or of a lawful prince to his subjects;—law and conscience bind alike the one to the right use of the authority, and the other to a cheerful subjection.

If it is inquired how we may know when authority is rightfully held and exercised, the answer is, that, in most cases, nature itself, or God's providence, will be found performing the inauguration and answering the question. When God or nature presents to the eye of the world a parent or a master, it tells at the same time, that the one is to be honoured by his child, and the other to be obeyed by his servant. And in respect of the person or persons on whom the power of government—that is, the supreme authority in a state—is devolved by the divine will, it may surely be understood that he will clearly point this

out, either by express revelation, or by the practical indices of his providence. For example, when he caused his prophet to anoint David to be king, he did so by revelation; but he fitted him, at the same time, by talents, dispositions, and experience, for the high office, and thus by his providence pointed him out to the people for their choice; or without any such express indications or acts, as when, in an anarchical state of society, an individual is found possessed of those singular endowments for government, which all the people see and gladly acknowledge. Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson may be taken as instances of what we mean.

No man ought to arrogate to himself the authority in question; nor ought a people to own, or, however great his qualifications and power may be, to submit to any such arrogation.

SECTION VI.

SCRIPTURAL DOCTRINE OF POWERS.

Physical and Moral Powers are of God—Effect of resistance to them—The tyrannous use of Power not of God—There ought to be no arrogation of Power by any one—God to be consulted in the distribution of Power—Usurpation—Providence permits usurpation and abuse of it—Various Errors on the subject of human Powers refuted—Examples of the Divine Doctrine on this subject in the Inspired History.

The DOCTRINE OF POWERS is very clearly and very expressly laid down in Rom. xiii.: “ Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers,” &c. From this special and appropriate revelation we learn that all powers are ordinations of God.

(1.) All *physical powers*, or those which are found in material nature, and are there, by the will of the Creator, fixed and unchangeable, as well as kept uniform in their operation—to these powers all men are, by divine law, to be subject, and this not by constraint or with reluctance, but, in connection with

moral law, with a most willing and ready mind. Such power being an ordinance of God, whosoever resists, resists God's ordinance, and consequently resists God himself. The resistance is offered when we murmur against, repine at, or are dissatisfied with, any one of the physical laws of which we speak, such as sunshine and rain, the seasons, darkness of night, and the like.

He that resists them shall both receive condemnation from God, and shall himself suffer; for he fights against God.

(2.) *Moral and intellectual powers* and governments are of God. By Him these are created and distributed throughout the moral, social, political, and religious frame of human society. They are all of them subject to his eternal and unlimited dominion. They are all the ordinations of his sovereign will. They themselves, and all their regulation, belong to him as supreme; and since "every soul" forms a part of the society among which, and for which, these powers exist, "every soul," the mightiest no less than the meanest, ought to "be subject" to them. The greatest princes are as plainly and as firmly bound by this law to submit to the higher powers—the powers of creation and of God, which *are all higher than they*—as the lowest among their subjects. If God places dominion in their hands, it is not that they may use it at their pleasure, or in any other way than according to the rule which he, the HIGHEST of all powers, has pre-

scribed for them. The Eternal King, the highest Power, sits enthroned above them. His will is their law; and under him, and for him, must they sway their sceptres. They are bound to know and loyally to own, "that by Him kings reign, and princes decree justice."

Should *they resist* this higher, this highest power, this ordinance of God, they shall most certainly receive to themselves *condemnation* from God, who, in the course of his righteous and irresistible providence, shall make them suffer, it may be, at the hands of their own subjects, or in a variety of other ways, his just and signal vengeance.

Should a *subject*, under lawfully possessed and rightly exercised government, resist this higher power, which is to him an ordinance of God, he shall receive to himself condemnation both from the higher power, and from the highest, even God.

Thus all men, of every rank and condition, rulers and ruled, are put under higher power, and taught to stand in reverential, conscientious, and obedient fear of it; and thus only can the grand and holy order of the divine government and the universal good of the world be either firmly established, or fully enjoyed.

The *tyrannous and cruel* use of power cannot be an ordinance of God. It is lawlessness and rebellion against both God and man. It is a monstrous abuse of one of God's highest gifts. It is, therefore, expressly forbidden by God; and will certainly and justly be punished.

To a power thus abused *no soul* is required to yield a willing and cheerful obedience. The abuse in question is nothing else than the application of physical force and power to the purpose of thwarting or setting aside the only end intended to be served by the divine ordination of government. It is to turn ruling into “a terror for those that do well;” that is, a blessing into a curse.

But not only is the will of God to be obeyed in the exercise of power on the one hand, and in submitting to it on the other, but that will is to be *consulted* ere the distribution of it is made, and ere the person in whom it shall reside is chosen; that is, no individual is to arrogate any power to himself, or to be by others promoted to it, unless either express revelation or clear providential indications have pointed him out for this purpose. The whole matter, being in its very nature purely moral, must be dealt with by all according to the original laws of morality; and must be so conducted, as that an enlightened conscience, both in the possessor of dominion and in him who is placed under it, shall feel bound to sanction the arrangement. It is thus only that every soul *can be* subject to the higher powers, “not only for wrath”—that is, for fear of the wrath or punishment of those who have the power—“but also for conscience’ sake.”

Usurpation, no less than abuse of power, is a resistance of those higher powers which are ordained of God; and no man is commanded to be subject to

a power so usurped. Absalom, when he snatched dominion from his father, was, *de facto* and in providence, king instead of his father. But in this he resisted the ordinance of God, and received to himself condemnation. He never was by any law or right entitled to the obedience of the people; and their resistance to him and his arrogated lawless sovereignty, was no resistance offered to the ordinance of God.

It should never be forgotten that Providence *permits* usurpation and abuse of dominion, which law and justice, and even God, condemn; so that the successes of lawless ambition, and the temporary prosperity of tyranny in princes, or of unwarranted rebellion in subjects, is no proof that God approves of such things. He condemns innumerable acts of men which he permits to be done, and which take their places in the movements, influences, and history of his most marvellous government. It is a sad mistake, therefore, to regard events as if they were law and right; and to vindicate our actions rather by pointing to their immediate results, than by referring them to the law of righteousness, to which they ought in all cases to be plain instances of an intelligent and purposed obedience.

From what has been shown, it will clearly appear that the *origin and foundation* of human government is the will of that God “who gives to all life and breath, and all things”—that “there is no power but of God—that the powers that be, are ordained of God.”

We cannot but regard it as utterly inconsistent with the profession of the Christian faith, to maintain that human government springs, as from its original fountain, *from man himself*, or from any necessity or condition of his being in this world. For this, first of all, would be to make a necessity or a capacity itself a power and a right; and then to view man as occupying the position, and possessing the rights of Deity in one of his highest prerogatives, and that simply because of his need of government—that is, because of his very imperfection.

It is true, indeed, that human society has *a capacity* for government, and requires it; but this is a totally different thing from its being the *source* of it. If it has also the power of governing, this, like every thing else, must be derived from the Author of all, who is therefore its source, and has a right to prescribe laws for its exercise; which laws may be obeyed or transgressed, but under responsibility to the Supreme. He made man for society; and for his perfection in society government is necessary. To secure this perfection, He furnishes both the power and the law, of which we have spoken.

All this entirely agrees with his making use of all the powers and faculties which he has bestowed on man, and which fit him for a state of government. He imparts the desire to govern and to be governed, and employs that desire in leading one to rule, and another to submit to be ruled; so that, when all these capacities and powers are exercised according

to his will, then the end he contemplates is answered, and society reaps the benefit.

These tendencies and powers in human nature, which God at first communicated, form a striking part of his own image which he primarily impressed on man, and which was derived from him along with the obligation to use them as their Author ordained. That we, in our fallen state, should have employed this power to thwart, if possible, the divine will; that we should have abused it by regarding it as our own, and therefore not responsible to God for it; that we should have framed civil and religious polities, and conducted the affairs of government without reference to him, is not greatly to be wondered at. It is rather what we should have been led to expect from the fall. At that eventful period, the tempter promised to men, that, doing their own will, they should "be as gods, knowing good and evil;" and they, then and ever since, have been disposed to believe that they are gods, and know as gods. They have a mad and universal passion for seeking how they may escape from obligations to the Deity for what they desire or purpose to do. Their love of their own power makes them willing to refuse all that is superior to it, even that which gives birth and continuance to their own. We cannot but observe and deplore the mournful spectacle presented in human nature, of a habit of mind that does not at once and most gladly hail even the smallest appearances of its having derived all its powers, with the law of their functions,

from the all-perfect and infinite One, and that does not rather feel a craving after such a high connection with the Omnipotent as this of which we speak.

To maintain, as many have done, that government is innate in human nature, whether fallen or unfallen, and that the voice of the people is the voice of God (understanding by that expression, that God ratifies whatever the people wills, or that the will of the people, and not the will of God, is the primary source of government, and therefore the vindication of whatever government the people may choose to set up), is most contrary to the very first principles of our reason, and even of our being. For it is by necessary consequence to maintain, that not God, but the people are the proper source of power and of law; that men ought to be purely self-governed; that they are responsible only to themselves; that the will and approval of the people are a sufficient vindication of all their laws and government; and that whatever course they may choose to follow in this matter must be both wise and just:—than which conclusions, what can be more absurd and monstrous?

This same reasoning applies with much greater force to the opinion of those who hold that the will of a sovereign, whether that sovereign be an individual or a number of individuals, constitutes not only the power but also the right to govern, and that it may dictate absolutely what the law and government shall be. This would be a right to independent despotism in *one* or in a *few*—a thing still less conceivable as

right and just than as existing in many or even in all of the people. In fact, the thing we speak of can exist in *none*, since the obligation lies upon one and all to receive law from, to submit to, and to act in conformity with, both the particular and universal law and government of God. Individuals, it is true, may, just as multitudes in other cases, have power to govern as they please. But it must never be forgotten that, when speaking of a creature, there is always a vast difference between power and right. Power may be, and often has been, exercised against all right, both divine and human; and right has often had to contend with, and to suffer at the hand of, power thus mis-applied. It is only when both go side by side, and with equal steps, that the course of things proceeds in well-being, producing and securing the highest and best interests of society.

Not only do the Scriptures represent all power and right to govern to be of God, but they furnish some striking examples and illustrations of this great truth. God permits the nation of Israel, within certain limits, to choose that form of government under which they wish to live (Deut. xvii. 14, 15); but he gives them no permission to change the foundations, or to modify the character of the government itself. He takes care to reiterate their obligations, under every form of government, to govern according to his law; and he commands the people to be submissive to such rule. The nation, in the time of Samuel, feeling deeply the practical evils which arose from

the misgovernment of his sons, desired a monarch. Samuel the prophet, to whom they made known their wishes, opposed them, being offended, as it would appear, at their rejection of the government of his sons, and at the motives of the people themselves in this transaction. God, however, instructs the prophet to yield to their request; but, at the same time, to declare to them that they must not expect perfect freedom from all the evils of which they complained when they should be under a monarchy, for which they had expressed such a preference. In other words, he would have them to know that, under every form of government, oppressions and cruelties on the one hand, and sufferings and murmurs on the other, were to be anticipated as likely to arise at once from the faults of the rulers and of the ruled; God thus teaching us that the happiness of a nation depends, not so much on the form of its government, as on the character which belongs to it, on the law which it administers, and on the virtue of the people who submit to it.

When the kingly government, thus desired and conceded, was actually to be set up, we find that God first appointed the person who was to be king (1 Sam. ix. 15–17, x. 1): then laid upon him his commands (1 Sam. x. 7, 8): and then the choice or acquiescence of the people in this appointment was secured. (1 Sam. x. 19–24).

Again, as it was predetermined that this kingly power should be in the tribe of Judah (Gen. xlix. 8–10),

and not in that of Benjamin, to which Saul belonged, and as Saul's conduct had merited the forfeiture of the hereditary sovereign power (1 Sam. xv.), God, by the instrumentality of his prophet, selected David (1 Sam. xvi.), and anointed him (verse 13) to be king, though his choice and coronation by the people were not to take place till God removed Saul out of the way. Meanwhile a splendid exhibition of David's high qualities, and a long series of distinguished services, were securing to him the affection of the people. They saw none equal to him in qualifications for the throne. Accordingly, no sooner was Saul dead, than the tribe of Judah chose and anointed David to be king over them instead of Saul (2 Sam. ii. 4-7); and at length the other tribes, driven from their attachment to the family of their late prince by a succession of adverse events, betook themselves to David, chose and anointed to be their king also, him who, for more than six years that he reigned over Judah, had given distinguishing proofs of his ability to govern. (2 Sam. v. 1-3.) Thus the whole nation was again united under one king, in whose family the government hereditarily remained.

In both these instances, the power is clearly seen to be in and of God; and to be only modified, recognised, and submitted to, by the people, under his over-ruling providence, as well as by his signified will, when they accepted and chose the power which he had ordained. In this, we apprehend, the example is intended to be the rule to all nations.

SECTION VII.

INSTITUTIONS.

*Their Necessity, Nature, and Use—Wisdom of those
that are Divine among the Jews.*

In every government, whether divine or human, what are called INSTITUTIONS seem to be necessary. These have pre-eminently for their object and end to teach and apply the principles of truth, law, and government. When wisely framed and rightly supported, they are of the very highest use, and even of essential importance. It is impossible, indeed, to conceive of any government existing without them, or of any good and happy government, unless they be wisely framed, and in their number complete. They are so many visible and impressive manifestations of the presidency and majesty of that to which men ought to be subject. They embody, preserve, and diffuse the qualities of the supreme power. They gather around it the intelligence, veneration, and submission of the people; and, by the support which they demand, and the benefits which they confer, they contribute to produce such an interchange of services as results in the permanent attachment of all to each

other, and in such a stability of good order as nothing else could secure. And who does not know that these are great benefits realized and felt in every well-governed state?

Indeed, it is obvious that, in the perfect government of God, all truth, and law, and principles of order, are wrapt up and incorporated in institutions of various kinds, corresponding with the specific and peculiar nature of that which they are meant to commemorate or to communicate. We might thus regard as a grand institution, the sun in the firmament, to give light—the clouds, to give rain to the earth—all physical nature, for gravitation and motion—human society, for the government of man and of inferior creatures; and, to come to revelation, the sacrifices under the law, and especially the sacrifice of Christ, for teaching and applying the great principle or law of atonement for sin—circumcision and baptism, for clearly and impressively teaching the doctrine of regeneration and holiness—the ordinance of the Lord's supper, for keeping up to the end of time the efficacious remembrance of the death of Christ—and the Sabbath, for preserving the memory of a completed creation, of a finished redemption, and the doctrine of a heavenly eternal rest.

It is most evident that, without institutions, government would want its necessary concentration, visibility, diffusion, and impressiveness; and that with them, it stands as it were in a sensible shape, and proceeds with a sensible operation before the

very eyes of men, rendering all that is otherwise abstract and hidden, palpable, easily recognised, and constantly impressive.

In nothing does the wisdom of God more conspicuously appear than in the nature, the number, and the variety, of those institutions which he has set up in his government of the world; and surely none will deny that it is wise in man to imitate and adopt this wisdom of God in these very things.

Besides, as revelation is intended by its Author to unfold and apply all the principles and modes of his government of the world, and therefore gives an account of the institutions which he set up in a nation that professed to submit to him, it becomes those to whom the cares of Church or State are committed, to turn their eager attention to these divine examples and models, and, so far as the altered circumstances of the world will permit, to set up the same in those departments over which they respectively preside. They need be at no loss to discover what modifications of their forms are necessary and warranted in their special circumstances, and may certainly count on the happiest results of the reverence they thus pay, and the submission they yield to the divine wisdom and authority.

SECTION VIII.

DIVISION OF INSTITUTIONS.

Civil and Ecclesiastical, with their sub-divisions—Their Relations to Man, and to one another—Their Separation and Union, as in the Church and the State—The Church immediately from God—Distinct from the State—Benefits the State—The State also Divine—Is not an Abstraction—Is Independent of the Church—Union of Church and State—They Reciprocate Benefits—Remedy of their Mutual Injuries—The State ought to Support the True Church, and that only—The State has a Conscience—May and ought to know the Truth—It ought not to Persecute—Proofs that the State is to favour Truth, and not Error.

The whole interests of men in this world being comprehended under religion, law, and government, institutions may be regarded as divisible into two great classes—civil and ecclesiastical: the civil comprehending all those which relate to the temporal order and well-being of man; and the ecclesiastical, such as have for their primary and grand object the training to excellence and perfection of man's rational and immortal nature.

Of *Civil Institutions*, the chief are legislative, governmental, and judicial, all which look to and embrace the temporal well-being of the community, though they are by no means confined to that single object.

Ecclesiastical Institutions, again, chiefly respect the support and propagation of religion; the preparation of men for the service and enjoyment of God; and the furnishing of means by which they may worship and serve Him who is their origin and end, and who, by religion and his Church, binds all his worshippers to himself, and to one another.

These two classes are not so far removed from each other, in their nature or position, as to be incapable of giving and receiving important mutual aid. Both of them being divine in their origin, and rendered necessary by the divine constitution, must be viewed as having a perfect amity, and as being so adapted to each other as that neither of them can accomplish its full task without the just and bennignant countenance of the other. Nor can it be imagined that either of them, in point of fact, can ever be found in a right condition, or performing its proper work, unless the other is made to observe and do the same.

They will certainly secure the greatest amount of good to men, when they are framed and adapted as God would have them to be, and are wrought separately or together as he directs them; that is, when they are set up according to his law, and are made

to point, both of them alike, to the advancement of his glory. They must fail of their ends, in so far as any one of them seeks to aggrandize itself at the expense of the other; and in so far as those who have the conducting of them selfishly seek to aggrandize themselves at the expense of what they should only serve and never command.

As all institutions ought to be framed by wisdom, and established by authority, the wisest and most authoritative must necessarily be those which God expressly framed, and stamped with his will, for the people of the Jews. They were the divine embodiment and manifestation of divine law, set up and working out their effects in harmony with each other before the eyes of the whole world.

Their relative positions—that is, the relation of each, first, to particular departments of the affairs of life; and then, second, to each other—were fixed and determined, as it required to be, by the same wisdom, and on the same high authority. In other words, their provinces or jurisdictions were marked out for them by Him who appointed them. He appointed where they should stand clear of each other, and where they should hold intercommunion and be of mutual service.

That they should sometimes, and to a certain extent, be conjoined, as they actually were, would seem to be essentially necessary, for the following reasons:—

1. Because the society in which they are set up, is, or ought to be, composed of the self-same individuals, all of whom stand in equal need of them all.

2. Because all truth and duty come from one original source; and hence cannot be separated or made independent of each other.

3. Because they are in themselves fitted to reciprocate benefits, and, by co-operation, to accomplish the full design of perfect goodness.

Man's life and happiness are neither made up of heterogeneous, discordant elements, nor of loose and independent particles, but, if perfect, are *one*; and therefore all that contributes to their perfection must, ere it reaches them, be combined into one grand influence, which, as it is seen approaching them, mingles like the waters of meeting streams, before they arrive at the ocean which they help to keep full.

We might take as our grand examples the two institutions of Church and State.

The *Church* has a very distinct existence as an institution, framed, authorized, and established in the world by God. So also has the *State*. The Church, as an institution, has received, retains, exemplifies, and propagates, divine truth, worship, and morality. It consists of all those who receive and obey the truth, as communicated by God, through his anointed Son, and who worship the Father, or profess to worship and serve him, in spirit and in truth.

As an institution in this world it is visible, and comprehends all those who, in man's judgment, know God and obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; though in the eye of God, "who searcheth the

heart," it really consists only of those in whose hearts dwells, and over whose lives reigns, the truth as it is in Jesus.

That religion and divine law enjoin the association of individual believers into a society called the Church, can be denied by no man who has the least understanding, or who will read and submit to the express revelation of God. When Christians gather themselves together, they do so both by the command of Christ, and by the corresponding disposition which the Spirit of Christ has created in themselves.

The Church, therefore, is no more the creature of the State, than were the doctrines, commandments, sacraments, and spirit of Christ, or the Church of the first Apostles and Evangelists, or Christ himself. The whole sprang up without the State, and was, in point of fact, by the State that then was, most violently opposed. How, then, can the Church be the creature of the State?

The visible institution of the Church, beyond all doubt, is directly and immediately from God, and receives both its being and its laws from him alone. It has not even the semblance of a thing human, as the civil institute has, which is coeval and concomitant with human society itself, and springs, to all appearance, out of the wants, capacities, and desires of that society. The Church, even as an institution, is a second creation, formed out of the chaos of the Fall, and set up in this world without any consultation with, and without the approbation of, any other

previous institution, or of any class of men, great or small. To this vast extent, at least, the Church is entirely independent of states and institutions. It is a stone cut out of the mountain without hands, which, by the power and grace of God, waxes great, and is to fill the whole earth, and this not only without the assistance, but in the face of the opposition of the world.

That the Church is an institution distinct from, and independent of, the State, is not only a historical fact, but seems to be self-evident. It springs purely from the sovereign mercy and love of God. Its substance is in the person, offices, and work of the incarnate Son of God. It is communicated to, and established in, the world by him whom God hath set as King in the holy hill of Zion. Its doctrines are all of his revelation. Its moralities are all dictated by his will and authority. Its offices and office-bearers are all appointed by him, and are different from those of all other institutions. The exercise of authority in it is committed to spiritual persons. It had a complete existence, and was in full operation, before any other institution recognised it; when there was no State which it could consult, or under whose wings it could find favour or protection—no State which would even grant it toleration. The matters subject to its administration are entirely different from those of the State. They are all spiritual and moral.

To mix it up, therefore, with the State, would lead the Church, and reason, and experience, into the

greatest absurdities ; would confound the office of the magistrate with that of the minister of the gospel, and the State with the Church ; and would give the power of governing the Church sometimes to individuals the most impious, or to women, or even to children.

Had they not been intended by the Author or Head of the Church to be different, Christ, during his life on earth, would have been bound to consult with the civil powers which then were ; to have asked the permission or sanction of Herod and Pontius Pilate—it would have made it a solecism in Him to tell the latter that his kingdom was not of this world, and have justified his being made and kept by men, a servant of rulers, and not a King.

On these, and other accounts, we conclude that the Church is independent of the State, at once for its form, its province, and even its very existence.

At the same time, it is most manifest that it is fitted and intended to bless men in *all respects*, and therefore to aid and benefit all other institutions also. For let the true religion, whether taught by God in his Word, or administered by his Church, but take possession of all men's hearts and lives, and then it will necessarily affect in the happiest manner all the faculties, the interests, and the happiness of men. It will "bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ," whose gospel and law are absolutely perfect. To this it is entitled, this it is intended to effect, and by this means alone

can men be blessed in Jesus, and all nations call him blessed.

The *State* also we must view as equally a divine institution, which either is or ought to be framed and conducted according to a divine law or example, if such law or example can anywhere be found. It never can be viewed as entitled to be set up by men according to their own fancy, or as the creation of their own will; for this would be first to withdraw one of the most important functions, and one of the greatest moral influences from the sovereignty of God, and next to put it under the independent sovereignty of his creatures.

We cannot regard the State as an *abstraction*, as some have done, thus annihilating its very being. For what is a State, but a nation superintending its own temporal interests and comfort, enacting and administering laws, and, by the use of proper means, seeking to secure the harmonious co-operation of the whole community, and defending its rights, its laws, its privileges, and its integrity? It is a whole society associated together for the accomplishment of these ends.

It proves itself to be no abstraction, by the visible forms which it wears—by the energetic physical exertions it puts forth—by the honours it confers and by the punishments which it inflicts—by its bands of officers, its tribunals of justice, and its armed battalions, and the like. These cannot surely belong to an abstraction. It has all the characters and proper-

ties of an institution, and that of the highest and most palpable order. It springs, no doubt, from a principle, or principles, which may be viewed abstractedly, and may, like all other things, be considered apart from the forms it assumes, the agencies it employs, and the operations it carries on; but so do all other institutions. It is certainly not more an abstraction than the Church is an abstraction. It applies to the same persons to whom the Church applies, and often employs these, and even the whole Church, in its service. Both of them alike, as we have seen, spring from the mind and will of God—both of them are under his law—the members of both are alike accountable to him—and they both have their place and their sphere of action in and over human nature, in and over human society.

That the State is independent of the Church, no less than the Church of the State, may easily be made to appear:—

(1.) Because it can and often does exist, though imperfectly, where there is no Church, as among civilized heathen nations.

(2.) Because its very framework is different from that of the Church, and stands distinct from it before our eyes.

(3.) Because both its laws and the means by which they are applied and enforced are different.

(4.) Because the special ends which it is intended to serve are different. It chiefly respects the *temporal*, and not the eternal, well-being of men.

(5.) Because its rewards and punishments are different.

(6.) Because God, as King of nations, as well as King of saints, recognises everywhere in his revelation, their distinct existence, and prescribes specifically for the one and for the other. He therefore views them as distinct from each other.

But are these two institutions so different from each other in their elements and ends, have they provinces so remote the one from the other, that they either cannot, or must not, meet and unite? Must they necessarily wage war with each other, or set men at war if the attempt is made? Are they so utterly alien as that they can never dwell, or let society dwell, together in unity? Must they always be seen frowning on each other, or regarding one another with eternal suspicion and dread? Must they always be seeking the subjection and servitude, the one of the other? Is this their nature, or their position, or their necessary mode of acting?

What these two institutions, under the management of men, have done in times past is not the question; but the question is, What is their nature? for what has God intended them in this respect? and what, by a right administration, may they be made to effect? Ought they to be allied or united? and if so, what should be the nature and extent of that union, and what the benefits intended to accrue from it to the one and to the other—or rather, to the society which holds and enjoys them in union?

and what is the honour which redounds from it to Him “of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things, to whom be glory for ever?”

For the solution of this great and much-debated question, we may go at once to the oracles of God.

It cannot be, and it is not, denied that there was a union of Church and State among the Jews; or that it was one appointed, directed, and sanctioned, by Jehovah. The direct consequence of this fact must be, that, in principle and in effect, the union of which we speak cannot be wrong. For, “shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” This much is clear, at least, that God saw no incompatibility, no natural hostility between them, since he set them up together among his people. If, therefore, any man cannot, by mere force of reason, or by looking at the history of the world, see how the just liberty of both can be preserved in such union, he ought surely to distrust the hostile judgment he might feel inclined to pronounce when he finds that God has already decided the question against him. By the appointment of God each of them stood in its own place, and by the selfsame authority they stood united to each other. By the law of God, also, each was directed to discharge its proper and peculiar functions, and to grant and receive reciprocal aid. They were independent and united, and their union did not destroy their independence, nor their independence their union.

It is true the corruption of men often interfered with the ordinations of God in this respect. Sometimes the State left its place to interfere, contrary to the law of God, with the Church ; and sometimes, though more rarely, the Church transgressed the same law, by unduly interfering with the State; the consequence of which was, calamity and disaster to the nation. Offended by this, God raised up from time to time his prophets, to point out and condemn such departures from law and right on the part of either or of both, and to give further sanction to the despised law. It will not do to argue from such abuses against either the law which directed the union, or against the union itself. The Church establishment may have proved injurious, just as any, even the best, form of civil government has often done, without warranting any such conclusion as that civil government is not a real good.

It has been maintained that the national or State religion, as it is called, must annihilate personal conviction and individual conscience.* But how this conclusion should necessarily follow, we cannot conceive; for surely the truth and law of God may be known and ought to be studied by the State—that is, by the persons who have charge of national affairs—as well as by any other description of persons. And the knowledge and conviction of the truth by all and every one, can never set individual con-

* Professor Vinet of Lausanne.

science at variance with the conscience of all, or subject the conscience of one man to the conscience of another. Let the individuals who compose the State be as enlightened as those who compose the Church, and let the State be as catholic as the Church (which it may and ought to be), and then both will move harmoniously together, having the same faith and the same morality, the same law of God and the same conscience.

If, by the State's supporting the true religion, individual conscience is annihilated, then we see not how the same consequence should not follow from the Church's supporting the same religion; but certain it is, that the aggregate never necessitates disregard of the individuals of which it is composed.

The State may support, aid, and protect the Church—that is, the ministers, members, and worship of it—without in the least degree interfering with its doctrine, discipline, worship, or government, and leave the Church as free as it is possible for it to be, in any circumstances. While the Church, performing its functions according to the will and law of its Head, will answer its obligations and pay its debt to the State, in the only legitimate way, by forming a religious, virtuous, and peaceful people, easily governed by just laws, dutifully attached to all righteous institutions, and most friendly on the surest principles to all good order and government. This is all that the State is entitled to expect, all it can be

benefited by receiving, and all that the Church can justly render.

We can see no difficulty in such a union as this, except that of persuading men to frame and preserve it. The question before us is not what the unions between Church and State are in the present day, or have been for ages past, nor what they may likely become; but the question is, we again repeat, What union God would have, or, which is the same thing, what union he has constituted; and, therefore, what is the right footing on which these two institutions should stand towards each other?

Should it be found in practice, that even when they are placed under a right law of union, but being administered by imperfect and erring man, they seek to encroach one upon the other ; if it is found that the State interferes unjustly and injuriously with the Church—in that case the Church, whose weapons are not carnal, can only remonstrate, or appeal to God speaking in his Word, and refuse to do aught that He forbids. After that, should its remonstrances be in vain, it can only suffer wrong, and still render good for evil. If, on the other hand, the Church encroaches on the just power of the State, and interferes with its obedience to the divine law, the State must do its duty by resistance ; or, if these encroachments are extensive and persisted in, must withdraw its benefits till the Church be reformed, and retire again within its proper boundaries.

A Church allied to a State, and standing in its

divine liberty, will be sure to draw into itself, by conviction, all who know and love the truth; for the truth of God is one and the same, whether it be in a Churchman or Statesman—whether it be in the Church or in the State. God gives law to the conscience of both, and the two obeying the divine command will never be found by their obedience to be set at variance with each other.

If any State be unwilling to enter into a union of this kind with the Church, then the duty of the latter obviously is, first of all, to declare to the State what it ought to do—in other words, repeat in its hearing the word of God; but it ought, on no consideration, for no benefits of a temporal kind, to sacrifice its liberty, to give away, in order to please the State, what Christ has committed to its care. In no particular should it turn away from the service of its Lord, to become the servant of men; and if the State shall frown upon or injure it when thus acting, Christ, in his high providence over nations, will speedily show how he can make his cause to prosper without the aid, or even amidst the opposition, of the mightiest.

When we say the State ought to support and protect the Church, we refer, of course, to a Church which holds the truth—to the Church which is the pillar and ground of the truth—to the true Church—since neither Church nor State has, or can have, any right from God to hold, support, or maintain anything else. Error can have no rights, nor can men who

hold error have any right to hold it, or have any claim upon others to support them in holding it. They may have power and indulgence from God and men, but nothing more can they have.

Again, nothing but truth or God has any just authority over the conscience of men; since truth—that is, God—cannot vindicate either error or the conscience that holds it. It must be a sin in the eye of the divine law, for conscience itself to approve of heresy, which is a sin of the judgment. And since the State is composed of persons, each of whom has a conscience, the association of persons in a State cannot annihilate, it only associates consciences. The State, therefore, has a conscience, and if we might so express it, a vast and most responsible one, which is as much bound to search after, to embrace, and act upon the truth, as is that of any individual, or of the whole Church.

To us it seems monstrous to maintain that the State has no conscience, and cannot know the truth; just because it would unquestionably be monstrous to conceive that God should set up men, his creatures, in an institution, and that for highest ends of law and government, in which he would have neither truth, nor law, nor conscience, to be found possessing any authority or operation, and which, consequently, he would have to treat as entirely irresponsible! Why has he put his book into the hands of rulers and judges as well as into those of ministers and people? Why has he given so many specific direc-

tions and commandments to lawgivers, and statesmen, and rulers? And why did he set up a State and a government in his nation, and command the rulers and judges of Israel? Surely by all this he declares that he regards them as capable of understanding what his will is, as bound to believe his word, and as responsible to him for their obedience or disobedience.

If it be objected that the State cannot know what is truth, or what is the will of God, and, therefore, is by conscience itself set free from the will of the Supreme; we answer, first, that the objection is thoroughly infidel, that it places all truth and law of God to men under doubt and uncertainty, and that it amounts practically to the same thing as to abrogate or nullify all divine law and government. And then—why cannot the State, which is the same as the *men* of the State, have any certain knowledge of what is the will of God with regard to them and their duty? What disqualifies them for this knowledge? What lays them under any peculiar, natural, moral, or official incapacity? Are the usual aids and assistances, whether from human study, their own or that of others, or from the Spirit of the living God, denied them? By no means: for He who is truth itself has said: “If any man is willing to do the will of God, he shall know the doctrine;”—and some princes and States have actually known and done his will.

If it be alleged that the interpretation of the divine law, and the understanding of divine institu-

tions, are exceedingly various and often contradictory, our answer is,—

1. That the Jewish rulers might have made the very same objection in their time, the Old Testament, which was in their hands, being liable to similar varieties of interpretation.

2. It would imply that, after all, the Word of God is no rule, since it may be misunderstood and misinterpreted by every man. This would indeed be to defame and blaspheme it—to put it in a lower place than even the heathen oracles. And,

3. It would set aside the obligation of all laws, divine and human. For what law, human or divine, may not, by indolence or ignorance, prejudice or self-interest, be misunderstood and perverted?

What we have said in no respect entitles the State to bind the conscience of the Church or of an individual. What it has to do is to enlighten its own conscience, and to direct its own way by the light of the divine Word. How it should behave itself to those who are in error, it must learn from the King of kings—exercising such indulgence or forbearance as he warrants or exemplifies, stretching the liberties it grants as far as the Almighty has fixed them, and making use only of those instruments which he has put into its hands for the performance of the duties he enjoins. It must never forget that the grand end of its institution is the glory of the Supreme, pursued in obedience to his will; and it ought to rest assured that his goodness will not permit the desire to know

what he would have it to do, to remain unsatisfied—that he who demands its services will not refuse to direct it.

The State thus standing related to the Church, and conducting itself by the rule of the divine Word, will never be found to *Persecute* those who are in error, any more than God or than truth persecutes. It would be little short of blasphemy to affirm that the Jews ever, by the command of God, persecuted idolaters: and it would be equally wrong and injurious to say that a Christian State, itself belonging to the true Church of God, and supporting and encouraging that Church alone, was guilty of persecution, when it sought by every scriptural means to discourage and suppress the propagation of impiety, idolatry, and other provocations of the God of truth. There is surely an immense difference between dis-countenancing and hindering error, and favouring the truth, on the one hand, and punishing with pains and penalties the persons and fortunes of heretics, on the other—an immense difference between true, intelligent, moral liberty, and blind ruinous licentiousness. There must be as distinct a difference as possible between the encouraging of vice and the encouraging of virtue; and the severities of justice are never to be confounded with the cruelties of fanaticism, or the wanton rage of oppression.

A State professing to stand neutral to every religion, as well as one that upholds a false, will more likely be found to be persecuting, than that

which favours the true. No more violent persecutors have ever been known than disbelievers in all revelation. This is natural; for they cannot but have a fixed hatred of all the positive beliefs which they reject. Christ referred to this description of persons when he said: "He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." Robespierre and the infidels of France showed as little tender mercy to followers of Christ in the truth, as popes and heathen emperors have ever shown.

It is but natural, on the other hand, to expect that a State and government under the influence of the true religion, will manifest in their acts the character which belongs to God and truth, or to the individual who is under the vital, practical power of the same faith; and that they will no more persecute, than the humble, true believer, than Jesus Christ, or than God can persecute.

In advocating the Rights of Conscience, men often carry the argument too far, even to a conclusion beyond that to which it is possible for society practically to come. If what is called conscience in one man, urge him to a course of action towards others that is utterly inconsistent with the just rights of conscience in these others—if, for example, Saul of Tarsus shall in all good conscience feel compelled to persecute to the death the followers of Christ, it will surely be wrong in a State so to regard his conscience as to permit this unjust and cruel exercise of

it. If a family should, in all good conscience, seek to set aside a father's authority over them, no reason would justify him in so far yielding to the attempt as to submit his conscience or his acting to theirs. As a father may not force his faith upon his children, but may, nay, ought, to teach and recommend it to them; so, though the State may not compel the individual members of it to embrace its faith, or the faith of the majority, yet surely it may teach and recommend it; in doing which, it no more violates their conscience than the instructor of youth who informs, advises, and influences his pupils—no more than the missionary to the heathen violates their conscience when he teaches them the faith of Christ—and no more than Jehoshaphat violated the conscience of the people of Israel, when he sent his princes and Levites to teach in Judah, and throughout all its cities, the book of the law of the Lord. (2 Chron. xvii. 7-9.)

The Jewish State, in so far as it acted according to the law of God, seems never to have persecuted men for their opinions or belief. The judicial and criminal law, indeed, prescribed capital punishments for a great variety of crimes against God and the State; yet such punishment can, on no legitimate ground, be pronounced persecution for conscience' sake. No one, for example, will ever call the execution of a murderer, an adulterer, a Sabbath-breaker, &c., persecution for conscience' sake. The State did not ordain these punishments, but the judicial

tribunals awarded them, according to the criminal law of God. The State under the Theocracy was not directed to compel men to embrace the true religion, to engage in any of its exercises, or to observe its ordinances in any sense which could be construed into an interference with the rights of conscience, though there might be, and actually were, restrictions upon individual liberty.

The State, therefore, when it leaves the Church in the possession of its just liberties, only permits it, without injury to any one, to prosecute the grand end which it has to serve in the world; whilst, at the same time, it is but performing one of its own essential duties when it helps forward the truth, and defends and encourages that which aims at far higher interests than its own.

The children of the Church are also the children of the State, and therefore are to be tenderly cared for by both; whilst the care of both alike ought to be directed by the law of the one living and true God, who is the true head of both Church and State. When it is thus directed, the two powers will be secure from jarring and undue interference with each other. The individual members of the community will, in that case, be blessed, even as the children of a family are, when both the father and the mother (each in his or her sphere) inculcate and exemplify the same things. Let but the State show that it cares no more for the true religion than for the false, and what is this but, by its example, at least,

to tell the people that they, too, may regard this most important of all concerns with the same indifference?

That it is the truth and not error, the true religion and not the false, the sound and not a heretical Church, which the State is to favour and be united to, admits of easy proof; for—

1. True religion can alone answer the good end which government ought to pursue. What is false or spurious cannot be also just and useful.

2. As nothing but truth can come from God, the supreme Lawgiver and Ruler, so *it* alone can be favoured by his providence, either in the Church or in the State.

3. The true religion may be as easily learned by sitting at the feet of the great Revealer of it, as any false religion ever was, or can be.

4. No possible right or necessity can exist in the State to abrogate all religions, or to adopt one that is false, or to set up the true and the false together; it being impossible that fiction can have equal rights, or can present an equal title to countenance, with that which really has its being in God and in his will.

5. God has published to the world, and enjoins upon all men to receive *the true religion only*. No other has, or can have, his sanction. Every other he condemns and opposes. And who can be safe or wise in opposition to the Almighty?

We have said that it is as easy to know the true

religion as the false—the evidence of Christianity as that of Mohammedanism. The proof of which assertion is, that the true brings far more evidence with it than the false can possibly bring, as may be evident to any one who will take the trouble of comparing, for example, the evidences of Christianity with those of the religion of Mohammed. Then, again, every man now has before him, not only the intrinsic or concomitant evidences of either, but has also the experimented and demonstrated effect on human virtue and happiness which both of them have produced. Besides, we cannot but maintain, notwithstanding all that has been said to the contrary, that the Bible is the simplest and clearest, as well as the loftiest and profoundest, of all books on religion, law, and government. All the grand, elementary, fundamental, and germinant principles of that book, stand as clearly before the eye of a child as before that of a sage; and none of those parts of revelation which are themselves comparatively obscure, ever throw the least shade or confusion over those that are clear and unambiguous. It is a highway so patent, and so easily found, that “the way-faring man, though a fool, shall not err therein.”

It is vain to object that this book of God can furnish no certain or adequate directions to men in the most important affairs of life, since it is capable of being, and has often been, so *variously interpreted*, and since there are so many sects of professing Christians who view its truths so differ-

ently; or that that should not be regarded as a strict law or rule, on which many and various constructions can be put. For, first of all, the earnest, assiduous study of the Holy Scriptures leads, and has led, the vast majority of those who love them to the same conclusions, both in regard of doctrine and of duty. And again, the differences referred to as existing among the students of revelation are far fewer, and of much less importance, than is frequently maintained; while the longer its truths are investigated, and the more its moralities are practised, the nearer do its true disciples find themselves approaching each other in the same mind, and in the same judgment.

Let it be observed, also, that there is no human statute-book; no system of philosophy, metaphysical, moral, or natural; no code of human laws, however excellent, consistent, and luminous such a system may be, that is not liable to be differently interpreted by different individuals. Who would feel himself entitled to say, that he is warranted to despise and disregard the laws of Great Britain, because there are different schools of lawyers, different interpretations of individual statutes, and contradictory judgments pronounced from them by able and upright judges? The divine statutes are as little affected by differences of interpretation, as human laws are; and, if the citizen is not exonerated when he offends, by alleging that the law of the kingdom is obscure, or unreasonable, or unjust, neither can the

Christian be considered as absolved from the obligation of the law of God, or from its application to him, by any dissatisfaction or perplexity he may feel regarding it. Under the Mosaic law, which admits of varieties of interpretation, the people were not at liberty to object to it on that account. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, indeed, thought they had as good a right to exercise certain functions as Moses and Aaron; but, by God's express appointment, they were dealt with as rebels; and their doom must be regarded as both merited and just.

It is sometimes said, that if Christian rulers have a right to set up a system of Christian education and worship, heathen or Mohammedan rulers must have the same right in reference to their forms of religion; and from the consequences to which this doctrine would lead, it is inferred that rulers ought to take no cognizance of religion in their government of a nation. This reasoning, however, proceeds on the assumption, that the duty of rulers, and their right, are the same thing—that error has equal proofs and rights with truth—that a man is as well entitled to think and act wrong, as the contrary—that it is impossible to distinguish between truth and error—or, that there is no such thing as truth, unless it be that which a man holds to be so. No such assumption can be allowed, since it is demonstrable that error and falsehood, having no right to exist, cannot convey rights to, or stand on any already existing rights of, those who hold them; and to say

that error and truth in such matters cannot be distinguished, is to affirm that, to all practical purposes, there is neither the one nor the other—that it may even be doubted, for example, whether there be a man that holds this opinion, whether the sun be not a man, or whether the Bible be a book or not. Most evident it is, that if such assumptions were carried out into general practice, human society could not exist for a day. It is well, however, that no man can make himself such a fool, as even to attempt to act on this ground in the essential business of his own life. No sane man ever thinks of bringing up his child, or prosecuting his calling, or regulating his house, according to a doctrine so monstrous.

The practical absurdity to which we refer is so strongly felt, even by those who maintain the opinion we are animadverting upon, that they have generally limited the application of it to *religion* alone. They maintain that every man has a right to hold what religious opinions he pleases, without any respect to their truth or falsehood; and this, as they allege, because it is impossible to say what in religion is true, and what false, and that what is true and false in it may be equally beneficial or pernicious. But why subject religion alone to this law of scepticism? Why not try religious truth and moral principle by the tests of their own appropriate evidence? Why not ascertain whether there be such a thing as religious evidence, and what it is,

and then apply it? And, after it has been so applied, and falsehood detected, why regard it as bearing the same title to respect that truth bears? It surely may as easily be proved, in this way, that there is a God, as that there is a man, or a mountain in the earth, or a sun in the sky; that this God must be supreme over all his works; that, if he pleases, he can make known his will to his intelligent creatures; and that, having made it known, it must be a law binding on them. It surely can be proved in the same manner, that the Bible professes to be from God, and that it offers, at least, proofs of its divine original. It surely can be established, that these proofs are of all kinds of which the nature of the case admits; and that any other book on any other subject, coming to us with such evidence, would at once be received by every reasonable creature as true and authentic.

Should it be insisted on, that such evidence of inspiration ought to accompany the divine revelation as would render it utterly impossible for any one, whatever his dispositions and character might be, to reject it, this would be to insist upon that which is, in the very nature of things, impossible, and cannot be obtained in regard to any other moral or natural subject. For what truth has not been, or may not be, refused or denied by some one? It has even been maintained to be uncertain whether there be a real world at all, or a man upon it! But who would, or can give up the conviction of his own or of the world's real existence on that account? or

act believably on such a really contemptible unbelief?

If Christianity, then, be true, all other religions are false, and they never afterwards ought to be compared with it, except for the purposes of contrast. No man can be a Christian, and a Mohammedan, and a Hindu at the same time. And if Christianity be true, and other religions false, it cannot be wrong *to say so*—it cannot be wrong to treat the one as true, and the other as false. To say that this is bigotry or fanaticism, is in fact only to prove that these vices of mind belong to those who bring the charge, and that there exists a bigotry of the purest sort in favour of doubting, or negativ-ing, or rejecting every thing positive.

Christianity, therefore, must have rights over the faith and obedience of man, which no other religion can possibly have. It has a right, as truth, to be *propagated*; and it is entitled to claim from men, as of right, that they should propagate it. Indeed, it is the duty of all men who receive it, to diffuse it. It imposes this duty upon them, and puts into their hands those instruments for its propagation which itself has prepared and appointed. It claims of the State to be itself consulted in respect of the duty which the State owes to it.

Our argument not being with Mohammedan States, we are not called upon to show what is their duty towards Mohammedanism; but we may just say, in passing, that Mohammedanism being false, has no

right to become law to the faith of any man, and, therefore, can have no rights over Mohammedans themselves. None of them has a right either to believe or to propagate it; and, hence, Mohammedan States can be under no possible obligation to establish or propagate an impious imposture. A belief in a false religion may, in a secondary sense, necessitate action, and impose a kind of fictitious duty; but all this has no more force against our doctrine, than the imaginations of a poet have against the demonstrations of a mathematician; to receive and act upon both of which equally, would be the veriest folly of which any one could be guilty.

SECTION IX.

SUBORDINATE INSTITUTIONS OF STATE.

Grounds and Reasons for them—The CIVIL are Legislative, Governmental, and Judicial. I. LEGISLATIVE among the Jews—Their Office, Duty, Powers, Forms—Motives under which Legislators acted—All their Principles apply to Christian States. II. GOVERNMENTAL—Their Nature—The Persons intrusted with them—Their Character—The Forms of Government varied, and may vary—Reasons of this—Limits of Discretion in Governing. III. JUDICIAL—Reasons for them—Appointment of Judges—Their Character—Sanctions of Providence—Ease of procuring Justice—Ought to be a special care of Government.

The State and the Church have each of them institutions under their care, and designed, by the benefits which they confer within their respective departments, to promote the grand ultimate end of each and of both. The vastness of their dominions, so to speak, requires that they should be broken up into several distinct departments, each having its

own appropriate laws and duties, and each administered by its own peculiar officers, all of whom must be held as accountable to that which is first and supreme. The wisdom and efficiency of what is supreme will be made to appear in the nature and movements of all that is subordinate to it.

When we look at the SUBORDINATE CIVIL INSTITUTIONS of the Jews, we observe Legislative, Governmental, and Judicial.

I. LEGISLATIVE.—The supreme Lawgiver of that people is God, who, by Moses, gave them a complete code of laws, which they were required to keep throughout all their generations. Whatever form, therefore, any visible human legislature among them might assume, it could legitimately do no more than study the original law, so as to draw out, and form into particular statutes, what might be necessary or suitable to the ever-springing, ever-changing exigencies of human society. It was the mere expounder of the divine constitutional law. It had no right to overlook, or alter, or repeal any one principle or statute of that law. It had, therefore, and it was well that it had, only a very limited sphere of action. We say it was well that it had only a limited sphere; for if the fundamental laws of a kingdom be wise and good, as those must have been, no greater calamity can befall a nation than a perpetual change of them, necessitating a like change of conduct; or

than such a multiplication of statutes, as renders it next to impossible for the people, or even for lawyers and judges themselves, to know and remember them. Besides, such perpetual change and accumulation are fitted to destroy, and actually do destroy, what is of utmost importance in a State, namely, the reverence of the people, both for their laws and for their lawgivers. Only that which is fixed, unchanging, and of long continuance, inspires the human mind with awe and veneration; and this effect it produces even though there should belong to it no other attribute of greatness. But how much more venerable must it appear when it comes with all essential excellencies besides, from the absolutely perfect, eternal, and unchangeable Jehovah?

The books of Moses were, and continue to be, a part of the rule and law of the Eternal. They were to stand as long as the nation stood, and were to be constantly appealed to, and acted upon, notwithstanding any inconsistent or contrary statutes that might be framed or enacted by men. This was often wickedly done by those who assumed the power of making laws for the people, their right to make them being no security for these being holy, just, and good. And it must not be forgotten, that it is quite as possible for laws, as it is for conduct, to be acts of rebellion against God; and therefore to be of no binding force whatever either on an individual or a nation.

Descending along the stream of Jewish history, from the time it received its divine laws by Moses,

we do, indeed, observe approved *additions*; but then, (1.) They are very few in number, and subordinate in their nature; (2.) They are made by men inspired and accredited by God; and, (3.) They are found to be in perfect harmony with all that was previously given.

We have nothing to do in this matter with the enactments of idolatrous, ungodly kings, or with tyrants, or with usurpers of the functions of the Legislature. It is only with legislation proper that we have to do; and confining our view to that, the truth stands as we have just stated it. And this observation holds good, whether we look at legislation for moral or political, for criminal or judicial, ends.

It is clear that, in such circumstances, and with such qualifications, it was of no great importance to law, what particular form the legislative institution should assume. It might and did take different forms at different times, just as the forms of government changed. It might belong to the heads of tribes, or to the elders, or to the judges, or to the kings, or to the representatives of the people, or to the whole nation, who were sometimes assembled for the purpose, in what was called the congregation. Still the power exercised was limited by the original law; and if these limits were at anytime transgressed, then the power was exercised against fundamental, constitutional law, and was therefore rebellious and revolutionary.

The *motives* which the Legislature among the Jews had to keep within the prescribed bounds were of the strongest and most palpable kind. Their fundamental laws had been promulgated at first in the most solemn and impressive manner. The knowledge of them was easily acquired by all, as it was easily communicated. As time advanced, Providence multiplied its most impressive testimonies to the excellence of obedience, and the disastrous consequences of disobedience to it—whether on the part of lawgivers or rulers, or on that of the people—so that legislators never could enter on their proper work without the benefit of these recollections, or without the guilt of overlooking them. If they regarded not these things, their ignorance or their unbelief was incontrovertibly criminal; and whatever unjust or ungodly law they enacted, was sure to meet with the condemnation of God, and to be followed by calamitous consequences to the nation.

Let us here remind our readers, that these principles apply no less to Christian States, and no less clearly point out the duty of Christian legislators, than they applied to the Jewish lawgivers, and pointed out their duty—and this for the reasons which have previously been stated. For let the fundamental laws of a Christian State be in accordance with the principles of the divine law given to the Jews, and through them to all the world; let the Legislature of Christian States regulate itself in its successive enactments as the Jews were bound to do,

and then we are sure the result will approve the wisdom of this procedure. It will secure the divine blessing, and the good order and contentment of all the best subjects. What a deep impression of venerableness will in that case be made on the minds of all who are taught the fear of the Lord ! They will see without difficulty how close that which is human is to that which is divine, or rather, see the divine in the human. The laws of the State will be nothing else in their eyes, and in reality, than the laws of God; and the Legislature will occupy the sublime place of a minister of God for good, not by appointment only, but in character and in positive beneficent operation and effect.

There is no force in the objection that might arise against this, that modern society, with its multiplication of interests, requires legislation which divine law does not embrace, and for which it cannot be expected to have made any provision. The Jews found no great difficulty in adapting their fundamental laws to all the varieties of their condition in after times; which varieties, it is maintained, were as numerous among them as they are, or are ever likely to be, in any modern State, agricultural or commercial, great or small. The way of God's truth and righteousness is far more simple and direct through all departments of human life and duty than many are willing to believe. Let the eye only be single, and the whole body will be full of light, as when the "bright shining of a candle giveth light;"

and therefore an intelligent, honest, and industrious Legislature will not long be at a loss to know what laws for special objects it should frame with the divine sanction, and secure of the divine co-operation.

II. GOVERNMENTAL — which carry out law into execution or effect, or are the actual application of law to the people, and necessarily take their places among what we have called Civil Institutions. In this view of an institution, it is a machinery of living men, constructed and organized for giving to civil laws their efficacy in the ordering and government of the body politic. In other words, it is a magistracy supreme or subordinate, having at once under its eye and care the conduct of the people, and the special duty of administering and applying to them the laws of the State. It may be regarded as that power which makes the law to speak and act, to defend and judge, to reward and punish, &c. It is, according to the divine intention, the law, put into the hands of living men, “to be made an actual terror to evil-doers, and a praise to them that do well.”

The persons who constitute, or who have the charge of this institution, ought assuredly, both by law of God, and according to all just reason, to be themselves willingly and exemplarily subject to the law and government of God; to be well acquainted with the laws which they administer, as well as with

the condition and conduct of the community; and to be, in their own persons, honest observers of their own laws: "for he that ruleth over men must himself be just, ruling in the fear of the Lord," otherwise they will be found to bring themselves and their government into contempt. It is, therefore, of prime importance that it be a model of excellency and efficiency first of all within itself, and over its own constituent parts and members.

If it is inquired what particular form the Executive Government among the people of Israel took, by the appointment of God, we may answer, that here again we perceive how little importance God attached to form, as compared with substance. It is, indeed, difficult to ascertain what was their definite or fixed form of government. For, as the sovereign governmental power changed its specific forms, so the form of which we now speak changed also, always adapting itself to the altered circumstances of the times. Still, we repeat, scarcely ever do these forms stand out clearly before the eye of the reader. At one time the supreme power is in the heads of the tribes, at another in the princes, at another in the elders, at another in the chief captains, at another in the judges, and at another in the kings. But whatever its form might be, its duty was still the same—namely, to administer the laws, to be a "terror to evil-doers, and a praise to them that did well."

This is in striking contrast with what one might call the scrupulous exactness with which the forms

of their *religious* orders and services were prescribed. The one, that is, civil government, being intended for *all nations*, when once religion should have become full and universal; and the other being designed to continue with the Jews alone till Christ should come, and by fulfilling, supersede them.

In confirmation of what we have now said, we may refer to the fact, that in the constitutional law and polity set down by Moses, under the direction of God, there are no specific forms prescribed for institutions subordinate to the supreme government; and thus the people were left at liberty to exercise a wise *discretion* on the point, in the midst of the varying circumstances in which they were placed—a discretion in the exercise of which they were directed by the general principles and guided by the specified uses and ends of all good, just, and pious government. From which we may remark, that the divine wisdom appears little less illustrious in what it leaves out of revelation and special prescription, than in what it teaches and enjoins. It thus allows, and in a sense necessitates, the employment of men's enlightened faculties in governing, and of an obedient heart in the people over whom such a Government presides. So Paul, authorizing and enjoining the Christians at Philippi, and through them all other Christians, says, “Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest [or venerable], whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there

be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." (Phil. iv. 8.) And the same apostle, by the authority of the Spirit, does *himself* exercise this discretion in certain matters. (1 Cor. vii. 6, 12, 40.) "But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment." "But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away." "But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment; and I think also that I have the Spirit of God." His conduct in that case must have been intended as an authoritative example for those who are disposed and accustomed to sit at the feet of the Divine Lawgiver. We have, therefore, the authority of inspiration for the exercise of the discretion of which we here speak; and in the case before us, viz., the form which the subordinate institutions of government should bear, we see the wisdom and even the necessity of leaving it under the direction of the same law.

III. JUDICIAL.—As it is essential that those who transgress the law, and those who keep it, should be distinguished, and that the due and necessary rewards be apportioned and applied; so it is necessary that there should be the institution of judgment to determine the cases to which special laws apply, and the persons to whom its rewards and punishments are due. (Ezek. xliv. 24.) "And in controversy they shall stand in judgment; and they shall judge

it according to my judgments; and they shall keep my laws and my statutes in all mine assemblies; and they shall hallow my Sabbaths." Hence tribunals are set up and judges appointed, that the people themselves may not be left under the influence of ignorance, or covetousness, or passion, or self-love, or desire of revenge, to settle their own quarrels, or to avenge their real or imagined wrongs; but that in all such cases they should be compelled by government to take their causes for judgment before those who know the law, who have authority to determine, who can calmly investigate, candidly receive and weigh evidence, and pronounce without prejudice or passion the sentence which the law prescribes. (Deut. xix. 18.)

To such an institution belong the judges and officers of statute and common law, and of its administration within the kingdom.

In the prescribed polity of the Jewish nation, we find institutions of this kind occupying a distinguished place, and receiving a special regard; and this because God knows that laws have their chief value from the rectitude, universality, and consistency of their application. Deut. xvi. 18: "Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the Lord thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment." Deut. xvii. 8-12: "If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between

stroke and stroke, being matters of controversy within thy gates; then shalt thou arise, and get thee up into the place which the Lord thy God shall choose: and thou shalt come unto the priests the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days, and inquire; and they shall show thee the sentence of judgment. And thou shalt do according to the sentence which they of that place which the Lord shall choose shall show thee; and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee. According to the sentence of the law which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do: thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall show thee, to the right hand nor to the left. And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest that standeth to minister there before the Lord thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die: and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel."

The character and qualifications of the judges themselves, the solemn responsibilities which lie upon them, the earnest warnings and exhortations addressed to them, the fearful consequences of their negligence or corruption, all prove the anxiety, if we might so express it, of the Supreme Judge on this subject. He would have them "to judge *righteous judgment.*" Deut. xvi. 19: "Thou shalt not wrest judgment: thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift; for a gift doth blind the eyes of the

wise, and pervert the words of the righteous." He sets them up, as it were, in his place, invests them with a portion of his authority, and enjoins them to act and judge like himself; and for the same end also, even his glory, and the good of the people.

All this deserves the special and earnest consideration of every Christian State. We are too apt to be satisfied with the mere learning and abilities of judges, with their general integrity, and their freedom from the influence of passion in themselves, or of bribery, fear, or favour from others, without attaching any great importance to the purity of their own personal religious and moral character. The divine law respecting them shows what high value God sets on this last particular. Exod. xviii. 21, 22: "Moreover, thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge; so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee." It is easy to see why this should be the case; for it needs no very profound acquaintance with human nature, or with the power of moral affections in men (and judges are but men), to be satisfied that a man's own principles and habits must greatly influence

his judgments in general, and specially those pronounced on actions which, though condemned by statute law, the judge himself loves and practises. How could a judge, for example, pronounce a severe sentence of law upon Sabbath-breaking on one who stood before him, while he himself really is, and is known to be, an habitual Sabbath-breaker, and sees no harm in being so? Is he not under the strongest temptation, either unduly to mitigate the punishment, or find pretences for altogether removing it? On the other hand, what reverence can he who is judged and condemned according to law, feel either for the law or the judge, when he knows that the judge, in the particular case, ought to stand where he stands, and suffer in his own person the punishment which he pronounces to be due to him?

In a State, therefore, it is obviously the duty of the supreme government to attend carefully to the character of those who are appointed to this most important office, and to remove from the tribunals all whose conduct is at variance with the laws which they administer. We can see no just reason why men who fill these offices should not be of as pure a moral character, and subject to as pure and firm a discipline as the ministers of religion; or why civil government in a Christian State—that is, a state professing the Christian religion—should not be as holy and righteous as the Church, its ministers being no less truly the ministers of the holy God, and of his

holy laws, than those which are commonly called ministers of religion; since *all* just laws, and all power and judgment proceed from God; and since judges no less than Christian teachers, are bound to fear, serve, and imitate the blessed and only Potentate.

The divine providence will certainly show, as it always did among the Jews, how deeply it resents immorality and corruption in judges, and in the conduct of a State which suffers them.

It deserves notice, also, that the utmost care was taken, in the erection of the Jewish tribunals, to make access to them easy and unexpensive. This circumstance is essential to justice, in order that he who suffers wrong may not also suffer loss and injury in seeking and obtaining redress of that very wrong—and that the law may not come into contempt, through the injured party being too strongly tempted to let its expensive, distant, tardy justice remain asleep.

It is the duty of government to see that this justice be administered freely, easily, and impartially, and that all impediments be removed out of the way, whether in the arrangements of its courts, or in the number and character of the judges, or in the establishment of the confidence and reverence of the people; for nothing can make a government more venerable than such a care of justice, as that the innocent may be sure of being protected and vindicated, and the guilty of being detected and punished according to righteous laws. It is as if the holy

God were himself sitting over the judgment-seats of a land, inspiring everywhere holy awe, veneration, and confidence.

SECTION X.

SUBORDINATE ECCLESIASTICAL INSTITUTIONS.

I. LEGISLATIVE—*God the only Lawgiver—The Powers he gives to his Church in respect of Laws—Orders of Men who fill this office—Limitations of their authority—The Church has no right to enact and enforce Laws as from itself—Things not Legislated upon by God do not need Legislation by Men—Things indifferent are not to be erected into Laws—Revelation complete and final—Development—Councils—Their Powers—Not Lords of the Church's Faith—Council of Apostles—Commission given by Christ to it no warrant for the authority claimed for General Councils—These have often contradicted the Apostles, and one another—Right of Private Judgment—Impiety of the Claim of Infallibility—Headship of Christ lasts always.*

The Church, like the State, would seem to stand in need of Institutions Legislative, Governmental, and Judicial; for religious, as distinguished from civil

polity, is as necessarily and as thoroughly under law as any thing can possibly be; and nothing so much blesses men with good government, or places them under a just and beneficent authority, as religion does. The Church, therefore, has its laws, government, and judgment, which are nothing less than the action and application of religious truth, that is, of the will of God, to the hearts and lives of men, chiefly with a view to their eternal well-being.

I. The Church has *legislative* institutions. In it, as in all parts of God's dominion, he is the supreme and only Lawgiver. The religion which he has revealed in the Scriptures throughout is *altogether his own*, and hence is a complete and sole law to the Church, which is also entirely his own. Indeed, religion may be viewed as in itself the law of God. No one individual, and no number of individuals, are entitled to add to, or diminish aught from it; and therefore no legislature, either in or out of the Church, can, without impiety, arrogance, and disobedience, enact or abrogate any of its laws. All that the Church is commanded and warranted to do in this respect, is simply to ascertain, expound, and apply to actual circumstances and characters, what it has received from God in his infallible Word. In her sphere, she is under the same restrictions, and has the same liberty which the State has in hers; while the same necessity exists in both, and the same authority is given by God to both, for the setting up of an institution,

which has for its object and duty to publish, expound, and inculcate, the divine doctrines and regulations, to enforce Heaven's authority, and itself to honour that authority, by expressing approbation of it, and giving to it its full practical sanction. Acts xv. 28: "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;" ascribing thus to Him who is the supreme power the honour, obedience, and influence of all the authority with which he has been pleased to invest his Church.

What was appointed, first by God, and then by the Church, for this purpose, was an order of men; the Levites and Priesthood under the Jewish commonwealth; and, after them, from the times of Christ, apostles, pastors, and teachers, thus to continue to the end of the world. (Deut. xvii. 9; 2 Chron. xvii. 8, 9; Mal. ii. 5-7; Matt. xxviii. 18-20; 1 Cor. xii. 27, 28; Eph. iv. 11-13.)

That the power of legislation in the Church is *limited*, as above, to the simple teaching, promulgating, and enforcing of the doctrines and statutes of Heaven, is evident; because—

1. These divine regulations must be held to be perfect and complete in all their principles and parts, and for all legitimate uses in a Church, which is entirely framed and set up by the special will and power of God.

2. In matters held so sacred by revelation, it never can be supposed that God would commit to fallible

and erring men, even though members of his Church, authority to make laws for it, which might be independent or subversive of his own.

3. The use of such a supposed power would give to man, in however small a degree comparatively, the prerogative of Deity, and be the same thing as an authority presumptuously to send up to heaven for *mere ratification*, laws which, in fact, had entirely emanated from the earth. In the monstrous sense in which the passage (Matt. xviii. 18), “Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven,” is understood by the Romanists, laws of the Church might all originate on earth, and with the Church, and that even in her greatest imperfection or corruption: whereas it is most clear that all that is there meant is, that what the apostles, by *inspiration of the Spirit*, taught, enjoined, or did in the Church, was sure of being treated above as a divine decree, and as having a divine sanction; or, that the Church, which is “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets”—that is, built on what by God’s Spirit they taught—acting on that law, and by these rules, was doing the *will of God*, and should certainly have proofs of his high approbation. In other words, that the Church’s acts are bound or ratified in heaven, when these acts are what heaven has first bound on her as law and duty; and,

4. If the power of the Church were to extend farther than this, no man or class of men could set

limits to its exercise—so fertile is the human imagination; but fancy, or caprice, or tyranny, or error, or ambition, or avarice, might, under a pretended divine sanction, introduce into the Church whatever law it chose, if it but left standing in obscure corners, for the service of special occasions or purposes, all that God had ever dictated. The Church of Rome has exemplified the extent to which this wanton use of legislative power may proceed. That Church has not, indeed, so far as we know, thrown out any one important truth or duty of revelation, or expressly denied it; but whilst it has allowed all to remain, it has jostled aside, or disarranged, overlaid, disguised, or perverted all, by a vast multitude of other doctrines, duties, and services of religion and morality, continually increasing, and capable of still further increase; insomuch that the laws of *God's* Church can scarcely be seen, and that extremely little effect is, or can be, given to them. And who does not know, that the teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, and the binding of burdensome observances—burdensome at once to conscience and to life—by other professed Churches, have demonstrated how unsafe and injurious it is to concede the power of adding to the commandments of God? Moreover, the fondness which men have for their own creations and inventions is sure to lead to this sad consequence—a decided preference for what is their own, and what arises from themselves, to the things which spring

directly from God. For just as what proceeds from God is dear to him, so is what proceeds from fallen men dear to them.

(1.) Should it be argued, first, that the Church has a power, which it has received from God, to enact rules and ceremonies for itself, we have to reply, that we desiderate proof of the alleged fact. Where, in the whole compass of revelation, is any concession of such a power made or declared? Where, without the authority of divine inspiration, was any one act of this power ever exercised by the Church during the time it was laying the foundations, and rearing the superstructure, and enjoying the privileges of the kingdom of God on earth? We find it, indeed, declared, that the Church is “the pillar and ground of the truth.” This, however, only teaches us, that it rests “on the foundation of the apostles and prophets”—that is, on the doctrines taught by the apostles and prophets—“Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone;” and that it is erected in the world by Christ as an institution for exhibiting to the view of all men, and for supporting, by word and deed, the truth which, through prophets and apostles, he has committed to it to keep as his own decree. This truth is not by any means to be added to or changed by a Church which is itself but the *creature* of the truth, and is built on it. No part of what the Church teaches or enjoins should be its own, in the sense of its having come originally from it, and not from Christ himself, or those whom he by his Spirit

inspired to write his decrees. It would seem absurd to say, that the Church is truth or law. This can only be predicated of its Foundation or Head. The Church can be nothing more than the *pillar* which supports and displays the truth—the *ground* in this world on which Christ has laid the truth to be enjoyed, exhibited, and preserved.

(2.) Or should it be argued, secondly, that there are various things necessary in the ordering of the Church, which are not in any other way provided for by its Head, and that, therefore, power must exist in the Church to order them according to its own wisdom; it is answered, that the things so supposed must be held to be so trivial as *not to need* law; or so clearly falling under the general rules, as that no man in his senses can fail to perceive under what divine regulation they come; or that they belong to that rule of Christian discretion, the nature and limits of which we have already referred to; or that a plain and urgent necessity will always bring with it a clear intimation of what ought, *in that instance*, to be done, without warranting the enacting of fixed laws by which such necessities may be met in times to come.

(3.) Or should it be argued, thirdly, that there are *things indifferent* in themselves, yet needing regulations, over which the Church must be understood to have control, it is replied, 1st, That it would require something like omniscience to determine positively what are things indifferent. 2^d, That the

very idea of things indifferent, removes them from the necessity of any authoritative regulation whatever. *3d*, That to legislate for them, is to raise them from their indifference into an importance which their very name and nature confessedly disown; and, *4th*, That were the Church positively to enjoin them, she would be asserting an authority over conscience which can belong only to God, and preposterously curtailing the liberty “wherewith Christ has made his people free.” What havoc has often been made of the Church by the undue interference of its rulers with things indifferent, such as ceremonies, vestments, and the like! This should now teach men to beware.

It is of the utmost practical importance to be satisfied that revelation in the Scriptures is *complete and final*; because the contrary notion would entitle men to add their own imaginations, and to heap up fancies and reasonings on the truth of God, pretending to have its authority, which are utterly subversive of its simplest and plainest dictates, and making void the law of God through traditions.

That it is complete, or sufficient as a rule of faith and practice for every individual man, and for the whole world, is positively asserted by itself, when it says: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be *perfect, thoroughly furnished* unto all good works.” It therefore is, and must be,

complete, since it can form a perfect man, and furnish him to every good work. What more can be done by any human additions? Would not the attempt to add to what is already complete and perfect, turn it into an imperfection? especially when uninspired and imperfect men are bold enough to make the trial.

That it is *final* is equally clear; for we are most solemnly forbidden either to add or diminish. And then, there is nowhere in the Scriptures power or authority given to any man or class of men, either in Church or State, to make alterations in the book of God—no power, no authority, to expunge or dictate a single article of faith, to change or modify the smallest truth or law. Were this power granted, surely such an important concession would have been expressed somewhere, and in the clearest terms. It would, moreover, have been distinctly limited, and strongly guarded, in consideration of the well-known extreme tendency in our nature to devise and make laws for ourselves in the matter of religion and morals. The Author of the Scriptures has declared, that “the imaginations of the thoughts of men’s hearts are only evil, and that continually;” which fact, thus absolutely affirmed, totally disqualifies them for dictating any rule of faith or practice either to themselves or to others. The history of the Christian Church but too well attests the fearful consequences that follow from the arrogating of a power to add to or to change the doctrines or statutes of the divine Word.

It may further be remarked, that were the power in question in any way or to any extent allowed, then there might be a swelling and increase of revelation without end; or, which is the same thing, of laws claiming to bind the conscience; all which laws, if written, would be found too much for the world to contain; would be more than the great mass of men could find time to read or understand; and, therefore, would of necessity oblige the multitude to yield up their faith and obedience to human teachers, or to that which calls itself the Church. No greater calamity can befall a people, than to have a statute-book so voluminous, that a man's life-time scarcely suffices to read it; and the mischiefs that first befell the Jewish Church, from the traditions of their scribes and elders, and that have since befallen the professedly Christian Church from a similar cause, are obvious and distressing even to common apprehensions. If these additions or traditions were not written, but only laid up in some memories, or in some Church, then what memory or Church could so contain all, or be always so near to a man in the daily practice of life, as to communicate unerringly to him, and that in due season, the necessary truth and lesson? The Word of God *could not dwell* in any one richly in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, as the real Word of God may do, and the Christian would be left the mere servant of those who might turn out to be the most cunning and arrant knaves.

We may well conclude, also, from the very perfections and benevolence of God, that if he gave us a revelation at all, it would be complete and final—that it would contain all we needed to know for our restoration to that state from which we had fallen; that, in other words, it would be to us a *universe of truth*, admitting of no new creations, and least of all, of creations by men, but only inviting and rewarding the humble and earnest study of its succinct but most opulent sentences. Thus complete, in point of fact, it is found to be in compass, in variety, in adaptation to all our wants, in depth and grandeur, and in the contempt with which it treats the puerilities of human imaginations. What is all that man has actually added to the light of God, even allowing it the highest importance it can possibly claim for itself? It is as chaff to the wheat, or as the taper held up before the sun. Let a mind filled with such additions be compared with one in which the pure original doctrines and laws of that Word rule; or, let a character formed on the one be compared with that formed on the other, and then it will at once be seen, not only how dissimilar, but how clearly opposite, they are to each other. The one will be the character of the Pharisees—the other that of the apostles and followers of Christ.

The doctrine of *Development*, which has been introduced to justify so many things of human invention, not corroborating, but supplanting the prin-

ciple from which they are said to spring, would seem to be utterly irreconcilable with what has just been said. Revelation has fully unfolded and developed itself; and the history of its development is given by inspired men—that is, *by itself*. It is not made dependent for this on fallen human nature, or on erring opinions, or on fallible representations, or on self-will, or on perversions of men. It arises out of, appeals to, and clearly interprets, so great a number of facts, and these of every kind in religion, politics, and providence, as is more than sufficient to show their unchangeable nature, and that they are the developments and samples of all that ever shall be in the world. The true development of revelation began at the beginning of the world, extended over a period of more than four thousand years, and was finished and sealed with the divine Scriptures; and the Church ever after is to stand on “this foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.” The Christian religion was as clearly and fully known to Paul and John as it will ever be to any other.

Christianity, as a pure fact, exists, not in the world, but in the Bible, and has its permanent home there. There only, and there always, it exists invariably the same. Thence the world receives it, and the reception varies in extent and intensity according to the inscrutable purpose and sovereign providence of God. To know, therefore, what Christianity is, we must go, not to the world, but to itself

—read it, hear it speak to us as it were in its presence-chamber, and from between the cherubim: we must hear, not the world's, but its own clear simple testimony respecting itself; or rather, hear the testimony of God concerning it. To know what influence and effect it has in the world, we have not to confine ourselves to comparatively recent times, but may learn them as they are declared by God himself, *in the history which He gives* of its influence and effects, and from the *prophecies* which it utters regarding them in after times, and even in eternity. We ascertain thus what is its genuine and what its spurious offspring; what it acknowledges as its own, and what, pretending to belong to it, it abhors and rejects; as, for example, of the many antichrists that should arise, the doctrines they should teach, the characters they should bear, the evils they should produce, and the doom that should befall them. What a monstrous thing would it be to ascribe to the Gospel, as *its* offspring, all that has arisen from the fancies, the tastes, the prejudices, and the blindness of professors, and to call these, or any of them, its developments! It might with equal reason be asserted, that rebellion is a development of government; that the exhalations from a stagnant pool are developments from the sun; or that the heresies of the Gnostics were developments of the Word of God.

We must, therefore, utterly repudiate the notion, that we are to study the doctrines and precepts, the

genius and character, of Christianity in men—in their opinions and practices. On the contrary, Christianity, if it is to be known, must be studied where we are sure it dwells—that is, in its own light. The events it originates, controls, and sanctions, are to be separated in our contemplation from those that arise from apostate creatures, and which it cannot but disown and condemn.

We might, further, ask the advocates of the doctrine of development, to tell us who the persons are, and what their character, whom revelation authorizes thus to change it. Are they the self-elected to this office? or are Churches to be held as endowed with this power? If they are, then whence so many contradictions among them, both as to doctrine and morals? or, can it be that real developments of truth or duty can ever contradict their original, or one another? or, is it one Church only—suppose the Church of Rome—to which such authority is given? Where is the proof that it received it from God? And how shall we reconcile the innumerable variations and contradictions found in that Church with such a gift?

Finally, since the development of a thing is always understood to render it *clearer* than it was before—*i.e.*, to show it to be simpler and more extensive in its operation than it was before—how happens it that the developments which some modern writers so subtilely and preposterously advocate, only involve and perplex the more the truth of God itself, and

the mind that is engaged in its contemplation? Into what a “mare magnum” would not their doctrine cast our thoughts, which lose themselves at last, between revelation and such expositions of it as their mad ingenuity has raised into a Scylla and Charybdis for those who would pass from hence to heaven!

What has just been said prepares us for coming to a clear judgment as to the power of Councils, Courts, or Assemblies of the Church, which can have no greater authority to make laws than that which has been already considered. Their proper office is to ascertain for themselves, and for the guidance of their own conduct, what the divine will is, and then to give to the Church in general the benefit of that light to which they have attained; but by no means can they bind on the consciences of individual members, any more than on that of the whole Church, their interpretations or judgments, so as to make the faith of the Church to “stand in the wisdom of man, and not in the power of God.” They can do nothing more than *minister*—they never ought to be *lords*.

If it is affirmed, that God has committed to them the power which they have often claimed, of being dictators of the Church’s faith; we ask, In what part of his Word has he done this? And again, if he has granted it—Why have they so often pronounced judgments, and framed decrees, most plainly contrary to the express judgments and decrees of Christ?

If it is alleged, that the council of the apostles at Jerusalem authorizes, as by example, the power in question, our reply is: That council was composed of inspired men, who were employed in laying the foundation and finishing the superstructure of the faith; and, that their decrees being those of Christ, are to be studied, understood, and obeyed, both by the Church and by her Councils at the same time. They are certainly not to be superseded or added to by any subsequent councils whatever, either of inspired or of uninspired men. To conclude otherwise, would be to affirm two contradictory things, and introduce the most unwarrantable and dangerous doctrines of a perpetual inspiration in the Church, and of an unfinished and unconcluded revelation.

Or, if appeal be made to the authority which Christ gave his apostles, when he commanded them to "go and teach all nations," or committed to them "the keys of the kingdom of heaven," as if He gave to the office-bearers in his Church the like power in their character, as successors of the apostles; our reply is, that even to the apostles Christ gave authority to teach and enjoin only what they received from him by special revelation. These are his words: "*Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.*" Even though the rulers of the Church were, therefore, to be regarded as successors of the apostles, they could only have authority to teach *whatever Christ has commanded*.

Should it be maintained that Christ gives new com-

mandments from time to time to courts or councils of the Church, and that when he promises to give his Spirit to the Church, for the purpose of guiding it into all truth, he means a perpetual inspiration, an absolute infallibility in the persons who compose these courts or councils; the necessary conclusion would be a palpable enormity, viz., that there are no fixed rules of truth or duty—no tests of truth and error—no use in obeying Christ's commandment to “search the Scriptures”—no difference between a pure and a corrupt Church, and no end, till the close of time, to the accumulation of articles of faith and rules of duty.

It might be added, that the perusal and comparison of many decrees of councils is sufficient to convince any one, that if the apostles spoke truth and commanded what was right, then their contradiction of these very apostles proves that, so far from being their proper successors, they were, to that extent at least, their opponents; and that if we ought to listen to the apostles, we cannot listen to them.

Besides, the histories we have of their proceedings, as well as of their personal characters, make it plain that they “walked not by the same rule, and that they did not mind the same things;” but that they frequently opposed, contradicted, and repealed the decrees of each other. To what a sad condition would the Church of Christ be reduced, on the principle of the perpetual inspiration of the rulers

of the Church! By what possibility could its members be brought to read and search all spoken and written revelations? Among the many things to admire in the wisdom of God, are the smallness and fulness, the little size and the great comprehension, of the Holy Scriptures.

From all that has been said on this head, it will appear that the written Word of God compels and binds the faith and practice of the Church, and that the institution of a legislative power in it is intended, not to increase and enlarge, but to expound and administer, that perfect law. It can do no more than bring it forth into the view of all, and urge its claims on the reception and obedience of every man, in order that each individual member of Christ and of his Church may be led to "sit at Christ's feet, and to learn the law at his mouth;" or, in other words, to bring Christ, through his Word, which is truth, to the soul, and to raise the soul to Christ. Since this is all the power that the Church legitimately has, each individual member of it is to be brought to learn the will of Christ from his own lips at last, and is to be put into the right position for judging whether the things that he is taught by men are consistent with what Christ teaches him. He is so to stand before the law and the testimony of the written Word, as to be able to judge whether what he is told by others is according to this rule (Isa. viii. 20); and finding, as he may sometimes do, that what he hears is *not* ac-

cording to this rule, he is to conclude that it is because there is no light of divine truth in them—in which case he is surely to prefer its light to their darkness.

This is the right and limit of *private judgment* in the Church, which is nothing else than the intelligent and willing subjection of every one's faith and practice to one rule of faith, and to one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all, and is therefore in a very special manner in his own true people.

We cannot but regard it as a fearful insolence, to set up a fallible Church as infallible over the faith and conduct of Christians; to appropriate to itself their trust, their homage, and their praises; to supplant the very God whose minister it professes to be; and to intercept truth on its way from heaven to men's souls, and these souls on their way to heaven. It were better, surely, that all praise should be given by the whole Church to God for all things; and if the Church is to have honour, that that honour should come from God, and not from itself or from the world. It ill becomes that which should truly be the humblest spirit on earth to be ever hymning its own excellence and glory.

It is here, and in this connection, that we most clearly see the supremacy and headship of Christ, as sole Lawgiver in and to his Church—a glory which he will not, and cannot give to another, not

even to the Church itself, though it be “his body,” and “the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”

SECTION XI.

SUBORDINATE ECCLESIASTICAL INSTITUTIONS—(*continued.*)

II. GOVERNMENTAL—*Government of the Church necessary—Christ the sole Governor—Means he employs in governing individuals and the whole Church—Church Officers—Their Appointment and Duties—Form of Government—Is not now to be Changed or Modified—The Divine Form may easily be ascertained.*

II. GOVERNMENTAL.—That Christ has set up a form of government, as well as law, in his Church—in other words, that he will have it ruled and ordered to perfection by the application of the laws which he has given to it—that He, as a king, has his Church, for his special kingdom, under his own authority, and bound to yield obedience to him alone—can admit of no doubt or question by any one who will own that the Church, in every proper sense, is the

creature of Christ and not of man. And that this his government of the Church is positive, thorough, and constant, clearly appears from the whole tenor of the inspired records, from the many laws he has actually promulgated, and from the striking histories of his government recorded in the Holy Scriptures. Indeed, no community of creatures requires perfect government so much as the Church, in which “every thought must be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”

It belongs to the supreme government of Christ, of which we speak, first to govern every individual, and after that the whole body.

For the accomplishment of the first of these, He makes use of his whole Word, pours out his Spirit, sets up and maintains a complete system of simple but energetic ordinances, and orders and directs all events of his providence, so as that, in the heart of every man, he and his law may be honoured and obeyed, and a perfect submission to his will in all things be produced; that, in one word, every individual believer may become a “living epistle of Christ, known and read of all men.”

This is the necessary preparation for the second, which in its turn is again a means of advancing the first. He has set forth, in his Word, the visible institution of a government in the hands of officers whose titles and duties he has prescribed. (1 Cor. vii. 28.) To this institution it belongs to carry into operation and effect those laws of the kingdom which have

been promulgated by Christ through its visible legislature (Heb. xiii. 17; Acts xx. 28, 29); and to apply those assistances and consolations which the Lord has provided, and of which individual believers and the whole Church may stand in need.

To furnish his kingdom with this so necessary a benefit, he, in his providence, and by his Spirit and Church, endows and calls individuals to whom this charge is committed, at once by himself and the Church; for he always provides fit instruments for any work he has to perform, and for any end he has to serve. Thus, in the Old Testament, he raised a Moses and an Aaron, a Phinehas, a Samuel, a Jehoiada, and an Ezra; and, in the New Testament, a Peter, a James, a John, and a Paul; and, having prepared them, took care that they should be called and appointed both by himself and by the Church. This, in like manner, will he do throughout all ages, so long as such government is needed, even till his whole kingdom be finally translated into heaven.

As the individuals to whom the administration of this government is to belong should be called and appointed by the Church itself, so the *manner in which this is to be done* is to be learned, as all other things are, from the Scriptures of truth, which have not left us without direction and commandment on this important point. For whatever controversies may have existed on this subject, it may safely be affirmed of them, that they have not been more perplexed than those which have been raised

on almost every other point of faith and practice. It is certainly clearer to Christians, before whose eyes the Church and its order have been presented by Christ in the simplicity to which he had matured it, than any other form of government can appear.

Till the lapse of several centuries after the Book of Revelation was finished, it never was doubted that Christ had intrusted his Church with the power of electing and calling out of its own number those who should have the rule, and who, after being solemnly ordained to the charges which He intended them to fill, should conduct their respective departments of government according to the law of their Lord.

Evangelists and teachers—the models of missionaries in after-times—having no government committed to them, but being placed under government, might be sent, and were sent, by the governing power, to teach and preach among those who neither could elect nor call them—a case which is no exception to the rule.

The Form of Government being both important and necessary, has not been disregarded or left out of view by Christ. He alone is capable of understanding how to perfectly adapt forms to things—to each other, and to persons or communities whom the things themselves are intended to affect. In this very adaptation consists, in no small degree, the perfection of His government.

In looking along the array of forms of government in the Church, as they stand in the Word of God,

we observe changes in the progress of truth, and these appointed by the Lord. The *last* of them at length appears—which must be regarded as for ever to remain the authoritative rule and example to his Church.

Some have argued, that because the forms of government in the Scriptures were frequently altered, and, on one occasion at least—viz., the introduction of the Gospel by Christ and his apostles—very greatly altered; therefore, the Church may now, by warrant of this example, hold no special form as prescribed to it, and consider itself as at liberty to frame a form of government at its pleasure, or according to its own discretion, to suit what is called the *genius* of a nation or people. This is futile and preposterous; for those changes, from which the argument is drawn, were by *divine appointment* and prescription, while theirs are not. And it cannot be maintained, that God now makes special revelations and appointments on this subject—a doctrine which must be maintained if the conclusion is to be justified.

And what is the *genius* of a people, that it should be pleaded as a thing that ought to affect this matter? The government of Christ is to mould, and not to be moulded. Genius itself, whether in individuals, or nations, must be subject to the Lord of all.

Besides, forms prescribed by just authority, are *Laws*; and we have already seen that the Church

has no power of enacting them. And who does not see, that if forms of government may be altered, multiplied, or diminished at pleasure, government itself might, at the same pleasure, be so relaxed or removed, as to leave all things in anarchy; or, on the other hand, made so minute and stringent, as to become an intolerable oppression? The happy medium is fixed by the all-wise God, and in that state has become a standing law in his Church. The Church has no more right to disregard it, than it has a right to disregard any, even the smallest of divine commands.

This happy medium of government, which consists in precisely so many offices and forms as are needful, may, with no great difficulty to the candid reader of the Scriptures, be sufficiently ascertained, provided he sit down in simplicity at the feet of Christ to learn the law of them at his mouth, and does not seek to modify, in order to make them suit human institutions and customs, nor adapt them to the service of some worldly end or partial interest.

There is, no doubt, a little room left, just so much as is necessary to the free and full operation of the divine rule, for the exercise of a humble and enlightened Christian discretion. But such an exercise as is allowed, or even enjoined, should always be indulged with the utmost caution and holy fear, and never, in the smallest degree, trench on any form which is expressly appointed by God. And it

should be carefully borne in mind, that the duty of the Church always is to bring itself up to all that is divine, and, never in any case, to modify what is divine to suit human tastes, prejudices, or opinions.

SECTION XII.

SUBORDINATE ECCLESIASTICAL INSTITUTIONS—(*continued.*)

III. JUDICIAL—*Tribunals of Judgment—Rewards and Punishments—Judgments, how to be Given and Regarded—Persons invested with the Power of Judging—The whole Church must Consent.*

III. JUDICIAL.—That Jesus Christ has set up tribunals of judgment in his Church, for the settlement of disputes that may arise, the determination of causes, the exercise of discipline, and the application of holy rules to the conduct of its members, is not disputed. Such an institution is no less necessary and beneficial in the body ecclesiastical than in the body politic, for the correction of manners, distinguishing the Church from the world, preserving its purity and union, and keeping up

an example of holiness, before the eyes both of the Church and of the world.

The rewards and punishments which these tribunals are authorized by Christ to adjudge and apply, are all to be derived from the Word of God—are all spiritual, and are to affect only the conscience, or the privileges, or the membership of the Church. They are never to interfere with pecuniary or temporal interests—they are merely restrictions or extensions of privileges and communion, and are to be directed to the moral and spiritual benefit of those to whom they are applied. They are of force and effect only in so far as they accord with the revealed judgments of Christ; and are of benefit only in so far as those who are subject to them receive them in the right spirit, and fall in with the ends which they are intended to subserve.

Should the judgments of the Courts of the Church be other than those authorized in the divine Word, with whatever solemnity or even pure intention they may be pronounced and executed, they cannot be held as binding the conscience, however much they may affect the visible condition of him who suffers from them. He is either a sufferer for innocence, or conscience' sake; and no authority or privilege of a Church court can, in such a case, justify it in doing the wrong it has done. What it has bound on earth, so far from being bound, is certainly loosed *in heaven*; thus persons who, for no

offence in the sight of God, had been cast out of the synagogue, were released, and received into communion by our Lord. The circumstance, that the courts are those of the Christian, and not of the Jewish Church, does not alter the matter in question; for Christ has not set them more free than others to do wrong, nor will he less condemn their unlawful judgments on account of their special relation to himself.

As there should be a holy fear of judgment in those who are called to exercise it, and as the utmost care should be taken that righteous judgment be pronounced in meekness and love; so, on the other hand, there ought to be great faithfulness, firmness, and fearlessness of men or of consequences, in the administration of that discipline which is plainly prescribed by the Supreme Lawgiver and Judge. The judges ought to declare and carry out law as for Christ, and then shall they have praise of God, and answer the end for which he has appointed them; while God will be felt to be in them, by all who are under the influence of his Spirit, who have his fear in their hearts, and who bow to his authority. Resistance by any one to such judgments pronounced by his Church, will be held by God as resistance to himself; and he who resists, must by the Church be held as “a heathen man and a publican.”

The anathemas of the Church of Rome, pronounced on those who refuse to receive the errors, practise the will-worship, or perform the sinful acts

which its Antichristian laws prescribe, are unsanctioned, nay, are condemned by Christ. They are not to be regarded, and they shall have no injurious spiritual effect upon those whose reverence for Christ has been the cause of calling them forth. These anathemas shall be made, by Him in whose name they are impiously pronounced, to fall on the guilty heads of those who dare to make so free with the thunders of heaven, as to discharge them on the brethren and friends of Christ. It is much safer for true believers to be thus struck, than it is for Antichrist to deal the blow.

The majesty of judgment in the Church is great, when it proceeds according to the express law of Christ; and the man who despises it, is nothing less than a contemner of the majesty of God and of his glorious justice. It is unwarranted judgment alone that can safely be despised or disregarded.

The courts of judgment in the Church must, in order to have authority, evidently be,

(1.) Courts of a *true* Church, and not of a false; since that which is false has no warrant in God's account even for its existence, and, therefore, cannot have any right conferred on it by him, which ought to be recognised or yielded to by Christians.

(2.) The persons invested with this power must not only be members of the Church, and endowed with suitable qualifications, but also chosen and appointed by the Church, according to the rules

and examples laid down in the Holy Scriptures. No others interfered, or were suffered to interfere, in this matter, either before or after the times of Christ, till human corruptions, or worldly ambition, or carnal wisdom—*influences which God forbids and disowns*—intermeddled, to their own shame, and the Church's sad injury. If the Church is not to choose rulers and judges for the world, as little is the world entitled to choose them for the Church. (1 Cor. vi. 1-12.)

(3.) They must have their order, form, authority, and instructions from God, and from the laws of the true Church which he has set up; and they must be able always to appeal to a clear warrant in the book of God, which all believers can see and feel, for the authority they exercise, and for the legitimacy of their proceedings.

(4.) The whole Church must be consenting to the judgments which are pronounced by such courts, according to the Word of God (Acts xv.; 1 Cor. v. 4, 5; 2 Cor. ii. 6); and every important matter in which there is difficulty, and difference of opinion, may be brought before the whole body for final judgment, according to the same rule.

It is not necessary, however, that every member of the Church should be present, for that is often impossible, and never was insisted on either in the Jewish or Christian Church. The Church is represented in the capacity of judging by representatives of all within its bounds, as the nation of the

Jews was by heads of tribes and “elders of the people,” and officers, called “the assembly of the congregation,” or of “the people of Israel;” and as the Churches in the Acts were by those whom they sent with their causes before the general court in Jerusalem.

CHAPTER IV.

POLITY OF THE JEWS.

By Polity we understand laws and regulations regarding property, persons, rights, and privileges, and the actual management of all national affairs.

In a well-ordered State such a polity must exist; and when it is wisely framed and properly observed, it conduces, in a high degree, to the advancement and happiness of the whole society and of every individual. Indeed, it is essential to that happiness. If it can be seen to be the offspring of highest wisdom, of a perfect knowledge of the nature and wants of men, and of the best means by which these wants can be supplied; and if, moreover, it is characterized by every moral and religious excellence, then it is fitted to confer all the benefit that can possibly be desired in this great department of human interests.

Now, we know that the Jewish nation had such a polity, framed and set up by special appointment of God. In all questions regarding it, this its origin has never been disputed, whatever differences of opi-

nion may have existed as to the meaning and use of particular parts of it, and as to its being applicable or not to other States and nations, in different ages and circumstances.

Of whatever modifications it may be thought susceptible, should it be deemed right by any other State to adopt its principles, it must be allowed, we think, that the principles themselves do really come to every State with the very highest recommendations and authority, since they come from God. When we reflect, that the Jews were not, and could not be, *so very peculiar* a people, as that their nature, their passions, and their wants were altogether different from those of other men; that, on the contrary, they could not but have the nature, wants, and capacities common to man; and that their polity was adapted to them in these universal conditions of humanity, whilst their peculiarities were substantially the same with those that belong to all nations professing the same religion, and bound to the worship and service of the same God, we might beforehand be disposed to conclude, that what was divinely given to them would be found to teach and direct other States also, especially those whose peculiarities, as professed servants of the same God, were very much like their own.

It deserves notice also, that their polity, in many parts of it, clearly symbolized and made known great truths and laws of religion; but that this, so far from being a reason for our confining it to them, is,

on the contrary, a proof that it and their religion were intended to go hand in hand to the end of time—the one recommending and supporting the other. The actual political jubilee, for example, and the liberty of the gospel, might, not in doctrine and in history alone, but in constant living fact, exist and proceed together throughout all lands in which the gospel is planted.

In reading the history of the fruits and effects of the polity now under consideration, and in judging it by these, we must never forget, that many things of which we read in the Scriptures were not the result of that polity, but of the sinful departures of the nation from it; and that, in point of fact, the tendency of the people to imitate other nations, and to rebel against the law of their God, led to the introduction of prudential dispensations of a corrective or punitive kind, which, so far from disparaging, greatly recommended that law from which they departed. Its real perfection, therefore, can only be learned from the profound study of it, as dictated by God, and of human nature, which it was intended to conduct aright; or, from looking at those particular periods in the history of that people in which it was most religiously observed, and therefore had its proper issues demonstrated. We are fully satisfied, that viewed in this just light, it will be seen that no nation ever was so highly favoured in this respect; and that nothing framed by man

ever has had, or could have, such happy influences on the general well-being of a people.

We shall now shortly examine in detail some principal parts of that polity, in order to show their excellence, and in how far they may, or ought to be, followed by Christian nations and statesmen.

SECTION I.

DIVISION AND TENURE OF LAND.

Importance of Property—Land the most valuable—God the original Proprietor—All held of Him—Tenure by which Land was held intended to keep the Nation agricultural—Other benefits of it—A model for Colonization.

Nothing can be more clear than the immense importance which belongs to property, both from the inherent and unquenchable love of it in human nature, and from the innumerable happy as well as mischievous consequences which result from the possession and use of it.

Of all property the most valuable, undoubtedly, is that which is, in its own nature, the most permanent, namely, the soil. From it springs almost all the sustenance of man, whether it bear rich harvests of

grain, or nourish flocks and herds on its pastures. A very little acquaintance with human life, and with the history of the world, will satisfy us that the character and well-being of a nation depend much on the nature, allotment, cultivation, and distribution of the products of the land in this respect. There is a manifest difference between agricultural, pastoral, and commercial States. Not only is individual character greatly moulded by them, but the social also. All manners, customs, and institutions, have necessarily a much firmer and more lasting hold of a people whose daily occupations are with the soil, than they have of those who are engaged in commerce or manufactures. The revolutions and benignant uses of the seasons, more than the movements of society, teach and affect them. Their habitual observation of the constant processes and rich benefactions of the God of nature, is fitted to keep awake in their minds such sentiments as are in harmony with all the laws of religion and morality. Nor can it be doubted for a moment, that the Creator of all things intended that the fields so widespread, so marvellously furnished, so carefully attended to by himself, and so capable of endless cultivation, should be the principal sphere, and the best rewarder of man's labours in this world. It is not to be disputed that divine revelation points to a long period, in the future history of the world, when the soil shall receive most of the care and attention of man—when literally “the desert shall rejoice, and

blossom as the rose—when the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, and the excellency of Carmel and Sharon."

The Scriptures represent God as the proprietor of all things, of all persons, and all lands. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." As this was true of Canaan, so is it true of every other country under the canopy of heaven. Men inherit land by God's gift of it to them; yet is it so given as never to denude him of his right over it. This proposition is almost self-evident; and there follows from it the solution of a vast number of questions regarding property, which have needlessly puzzled men in every age; and wrong views of which have often led to disastrous consequences, both in reasoning and in fact. Property can be held rightfully by no creature, except it be by grant from God *in law* as well as in providence. It is all distributed by him, and has such conditions of possession attached to it as he pleases. It is thus "he hath given it to the children of men." It is no refutation of this doctrine to say, that many hold property in land, or otherwise, who have and claim no such title, and accept of it on no such conditions. This only proves that God permits men, for a season, to act without or against his law and his rights—that he permits them to be guilty of what is nothing else than a robbery of him. The Jews held their lands of God; and there can be no just reason why other nations, especially those that know him, should not have

the same honour, and be bound by the same obligation.

The division and tenure of the soil among the Israelites, by God's appointment to Moses and Joshua, seem evidently to prove, that God intended that nation, throughout all its generations, to be mainly agricultural and pastoral, yet not so as to preclude their liberty of following other necessary occupations. As they were to take possession of a country promised to their ancestor Abraham, of which the inhabitants had become so enormously wicked, that the justice and even the goodness of the God of all the earth could no longer bear them, God directed that the whole of that country should be divided into as many portions as there were families of the Israelites, the tribe of Levi excepted; and that these portions should be assigned by lot to each particular family, to be its possession by a fixed and unalterable law—thus making the number of landed proprietors in the kingdom, and that throughout all time, equal to the number of families among whom it was first divided. (Numb. xxvi. 22–26, and xxvii. 1–11.)

By this admirable arrangement, these properties never could be entirely alienated, though the produce of them might be mortgaged for a season; that is, till the return of the fiftieth year (and it might be *redeemed* at any time before the fiftieth year), at which period they always returned free from

burden of any kind to the original proprietor or his heir. (Lev. xxv.)

The direct and necessary effects of this law are very obvious and striking. It kept the nation essentially agricultural; it prevented any great accumulation of landed property in the hands of individuals, and any family from permanently losing its standing in the community; it secured the strongest attachments of the people to their paternal inheritance and to their country; it placed a strong check on the growth of excessive wealth, and secured all classes against the extremes of poverty; it presented but few inducements to over-refinement and luxury, while it afforded the strongest motives to industry, and the improvement of the soil; and the sound of the jubilee trumpet, heard throughout all the land, set every man free at the same moment of time, and on the same day restored him to the possession of his own or his father's inheritance. What a universal thrill of simultaneous joy must have been felt on such an occasion! what a sense of benefits from this law! and what a strength of attachment to their native land, and to its institutions, must it have produced! The very prospect of its periodic return must, on the one hand, have wonderfully sustained the spirits of the poor and oppressed; and, on the other, have restrained the rich and the proud from oppressing their poorer brethren.

The very fact, that this order of things was esta-

blished at the beginning, prevented all partialities and heart-burnings among the people, introduced at once the permanent order, and furnished the opportunity, the inducement, and the means for setting up all institutions, educational, religious, moral, and economical, which became benignantly operative at once on all the youth of the land, and grew more and more venerable from generation to generation.

We cannot but regard it as a specimen and model furnished by God himself, of a *perfect colonization*, and of the proper manner in which a great nation should seek to begin its happy course. Were Great Britain, for example, when she takes possession of a newly discovered unpeopled territory, or when she is called upon to set up a new order of things among a people whom she has righteously conquered and subjugated, to adopt such a method as this, and at the same time to act out the whole principles of the religious and civil polity of God's ancient people, the world would soon be convinced, that what was done among the Jews is what is best to be done in all similar cases, in all parts of the world, and in the most improved state of society. We sometimes wonder, how it has never occurred to statesmen, into whose hands God has put the revelation of his will, to try this method of colonizing, especially after so much sad experience of the great and long-continued hardships and disasters which have arisen from every other course that has been hitherto attempted.

SECTION II.

LAW OF SUCCESSION TO PROPERTY.

What it was—Primogeniture—Its Advantages as fixed by the Divine Law—The Source of constant Emigration—Led to the Diffusion of True Religion.

The law of *Succession* to property among God's ancient people is beautifully adapted to this law of tenure, both in its principles and in its effect. The first-born son received a double portion (*Deut. xxi. 17*), whether of land, or of any other kind of property; that is, dividing the whole property into as many portions as there were children, he received two such portions, and therefore had a share *double* that of any of the rest; and, in default of children, the inheritance descended to the next of kin. (*Numb. xxvii. 7-12*.) It would seem, also, that he to whom the birthright belonged might retain the whole of the land on paying the rest the value of their portions; and that the father in his life-time might, if any of his younger children desired it, value the whole, and pay them their respective shares; thus finally discharging every future claim they might otherwise have had. This is what

we understand from the parable of the prodigal son. (Luke xv. 11, *ad finem*.) By this means, the younger branches of the family, if desirous to enter on pursuits at a distance, or to set themselves up in life, could obtain, to some extent at least, the means of doing so, while the land was freed from the great evil of an endless subdivision.

We cannot but remark in this the happy medium between that law of primogeniture which has so often been adopted by other nations, and carried to such an extent, as almost to necessitate the possession of the whole land by first-born sons, and that other law which divides what a man leaves equally among all his children. The local and national benefits which must have arisen from the Jewish arrangement are clearly of the highest importance. This arrangement fell in with the law of nature; according to which, the first-born comes into the first place of the affections, is at the head of the children who follow after, is the earliest capable of wisdom and useful action, and helps more than the others his parents, both by actual personal service and by assisting in the education of the rest. Besides, it is analogous to, and illustrates the mystery of that first-born Son of God, to whom it was becoming "that in all things he should have the pre-eminence;" who was by the Father appointed heir of all things, and in connection with whom all his brethren have their lesser portions of perfection and blessedness. It gave every individual a personal

interest in the soil with its products—it tended greatly to the healthful increase of the population—it rendered it almost necessary for the people to cultivate every inch of the surface of the earth—to clear away forests, to drain marshes, and to cover the very rocks and precipices with soil and vegetation. Taken in connection with other laws, it prevented the accumulation of immense populations in large cities, and the growth of conflicting interests between large sections of the community; while it led the super-abundant population to seek their subsistence by following other pursuits, carrying with them far and near their civilization and divine religion. It served to nurse and train a people to contentment and virtue at home, and to be in all respects a blessing to the world around.

After the subjugation of the Philistines and others, along the Mediterranean shore, in the times of David, the nation became partly a maritime power, having various sea-port towns, and an extensive commerce; by which means, and by emigrations into surrounding regions, occupation was provided for those who were not needed for the cultivation of the soil and other services at home. Jews became inhabitants of other lands, where they professed and practised their religion, that was periodically revived in their own hearts by their frequent visits to Jerusalem at the solemn festivals; and thus neither their love of their country, nor the honour of its people, nor the glory of their God, was allowed to decay.

By this means, that noble kingdom was like “a city set upon a hill, which cannot be hid;” showing that it was regulated by a perfect law, and commanding the God of Israel, its lawgiver, to the veneration of the whole world. Egypt, and Tyre, and Babylon, bear witness to the actual effect of their vicinity to so remarkable a people.

SECTION III.

SUPPORT OF THE POOR.

Certainty and Evils of Pauperism — Precautions against its prevalence—Positive Provisions for Relief—No Alms-houses, nor Hospitals for the Poor—No vagrant Poor—No enormously large Cities to serve as Nurseries of Pauperism — Grand Principle of the Jewish Law—It is applicable in every nation.

In the ordinary administration of the divine providence, the poor never cease out of any land; and He who cares for all, when he revealed His will, directed that a special care should be taken of them by that people who were eminently his own. On

this tender, important, and difficult subject, the law is very express and particular; and we cannot but admire and recommend to all nations for their adoption, the principles of the divine plan on this subject.

The evils, both physical and moral, arising from extreme poverty, are numerous and extensive, and have often been sorely or even disastrously experienced. A nation in which a vast number of the people are poor, and dependent on the industry and charity of others, cannot be a happy, a strong, or, it may be added, a virtuous nation; for such an evil, when it is of great magnitude, and of long continuance in a State, must arise in great measure from bad laws, imperfect education, or an unwise and oppressive government.

1. In the commonwealth of the Jews we observe, first of all, the *Happy Precautions* taken for the prevention of poverty and destitution. Among these precautions we may refer to the tenure of land, to the law of succession, to the education of the people in the true religion, and to the whole system of religious worship and ordinances, which were all admirably fitted to elevate and dignify the national character; while, at the same time, all the principles and precepts which that people received from God, as well as their remarkable early history, tended to inspire them with a strong, liberal, and brotherly affection, one to another. There could be comparatively few among them so immensely rich as to inspire

contempt for the poor; and few so wretchedly poor as to be greatly tempted to envy and hate the rich.

There were also, in the law, special provisions made for preventing persons in humble circumstances from falling into entire destitution, or abject poverty. Among these, we might specify the honouring of parents by their children (Exod. xx. 12), which implied supporting and relieving them in their necessities. (Matt. xv. 5.) The widow and the fatherless were on no account to be afflicted or oppressed. (Exod. xxii. 22, 23.) Loans of what they needed and asked were to be given to them. (Deut. xv. 7-11.) They were not to be subjected to any law of usury. (Lev. xxv. 35-37.) They might give what pledge they pleased for a loan, and that pledge was always to be restored to them at the going down of the sun. (Deut. xxiv. 10-13.) And then, they might sell themselves—that is, their services—to strangers as yearly hired servants, but not as slaves; and they might be redeemed from their servitude at any time, either by themselves or by their relatives. They were, at all events, to go out free, they and their children, at the year of jubilee. (Lev. xxv. 47, 54.) Besides, they were to be released from all debts at the end of seven years. (Deut. xv. 1, 2, 31.)

Nothing can be clearer than that all these provisions directly tended to keep the mass of the people from sinking into a state of wretchedness and despondency. The hopes of the poor kept them

in such an elevation of spirit, and respectability of character, as were of inestimable value.

2. The *Positive Provisions* of the law for those who had actually sunk into poverty, and had no means of supporting themselves, are characterized equally by charity and wisdom, securing the supply of their wants without wounding their feelings, or degrading them in their own or in others' estimation.

Of these positive provisions we may mention—

First, The gleanings of the harvest fields, of the vineyards, and of the oliveyards, which were always considerable. (Lev. xix. 9, 10, xxiii. 22; Deut. xxiv. 19–21; Ruth ii. 16.)

Second, The right to eat on the spot as much as they pleased of the grapes in the vineyards, and of the corn in the fields. (Deut. xxiii. 24, 25.)

Third, A share with their brethren in the provisions at the feast of tabernacles or weeks at the close of harvest. (Deut. xvi. 9–15.)

Fourth, A participation with the Levites in the tenth of all the produce of every third year. (Deut. xiv. 22–29, xxvi. 12.) From these passages, compared with others, it is evident that there was a second tithe of that which was left, after the Levites were paid, which second tithe every third year was to be spent at home, for the entertainment of the Levites, the fatherless, and the poor; and on the other years was to be carried in kind, or the value of it in money, to Jerusalem, for the benefit of the priests and Levites

serving there, and also of the poor, either resident in the capital, or collected there, with the intention of attending the solemn religious festivals, and of presenting offerings to the Lord.

Fifth, As much as they needed of the produce of the soil every Sabbatical, or seventh year. (Exod. xxiii. 11; Lev. xxv. 3-7.)

All these provisions taken together, when we consider, on the one hand, their amount and the power of so arranging them as to spread them over the whole year, or over all the seven years; and, on the other hand, the small number and widely scattered position of the poor, must have been amply sufficient for every necessity they were intended to relieve.

There were no *alms-houses* nor *work-houses* in which the poor were shut up from the attachments, the sympathies, the habits, and the interests of their relatives and the community.

No *beggars* were permitted to wander from door to door, to their own degradation, the corrupting of the morals of the public, and the absorbing of what should otherwise have been given for the relief of the honest and industrious.

It should seem, however, that individuals might frequent the public thoroughfares, to receive alms from those who passed by, as the lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, blind Bartimeus by the way-side, and Lazarus at the gate of the rich man, &c. Such permission could not injure the ope-

ration of the general law. It was merciful to those poor who could not avail themselves of its benefits; it was just to the public, who could easily satisfy themselves as to the characters and circumstances of these beggars; and it was merciful to all, as it served to keep awake, in every one that passed by, those sentiments of commiseration and pity which, lest they should become extinct, never ought to be long without their objects and their exercise in any human being.

Had there been very *large cities* in Israel, it is not easy to see how these laws could have been made to furnish a sufficiency for all the poor that are generally found in them. But, by the political arrangements already referred to, this evil was prevented. There were not, and there could not be, in Israel such vast multitudes gathered into one city as, for example, in Nineveh or Babylon. Jerusalem, the largest, could never, in the times of the commonwealth, be classed with large cities of modern times. And it may here be remarked, in regard to such cities, that, while they have various advantages, and produce certain benefits to a State, they are also sources of some of the very greatest moral and political evils. They draw together vast heterogeneous masses, who have no common character or sympathy, and to whom they furnish every indulgence, and present every kind of temptation. They are both nurseries and hiding-places for vice and crime. They serve to raise some to great wealth, and many more

they cast down into extreme poverty. They foster and diffuse luxury, spreading all around them the evils which they engender; and in them generally those schemes of sedition and revolution arise which terrify and sometimes overthrow the best governments.*

It ought to be well observed, that the grand principle of the Jewish polity respecting the poor, seems to have consisted in this, That the utmost precaution should be taken to prevent persons from falling into abject poverty; and then to grant to every one who had fallen into that condition a share with his neighbour in the produce of the soil, and in the fruits of the general industry.

This law, therefore, is *in its principle* applicable to every climate, to every nation, and to every form of government; and we hold it to be the duty of every particular State to adopt and act upon that principle, applying it in such manner as the special character and circumstances of the country may direct. A statesman can be at no loss in this department of his duty. The rights which God has given to the poor, should at the very first be by him recognised, and secured along with the rights of all others; while encroachments upon them by the more wealthy or powerful should be most carefully guarded against. There can be no better proof of the excellent polity and healthful condition of a nation, than the small

* See this subject admirably displayed in Foster's Life and Correspondence, vol. i. p. 235, &c.

amount of its poverty, and the rare occurrence in it of great wealth, which, in general, is but to accumulate, in the hands of a few, the tribute which the weak or the vicious, by some means or other, have been made to render.

SECTION IV.

LAW OF MARRIAGE.

Foundation of this Law—One Man with one Woman—Agrees in this with the Law of Nature—Promiscuous Intercourse monstrous—Practice of Polygamy—Its evils—Marriage Indissoluble—What instances excepted—Doctrine of Divorce—Parties not to Marry within certain degrees of Consanguinity—Should be of the same Religion—Should not be permitted to marry till they know God and his Law—Should have consent of Parents—And be capable of sustaining themselves and their offspring—Great importance of this whole subject.

When God founded human society, he created man male and female, that from this wedded pair might spring the whole race, with all the happy relations in which men ought ever to stand to each other. The first family of mankind was, therefore,

in its constitution, both the origin and the model of all other families, and of all the relationships in which these families, and their individual members, should stand. Families became tribes, and tribes became great nations, and hence the domestic economy became the mother of the political. As this was necessarily the case at the beginning, so it must continue till the end of time; the family, the seed and nursery and example of the kingdom.

A wise polity will, therefore, have special regard to this primary law, and will use its utmost endeavour to prevent its derangement or perversion; and this lest the whole system of society should be corrupted.

Accordingly, we find in the Jewish law a remarkable anxiety on the subject of marriage, both to direct the world aright in regard to it, and to correct the sad and universal tendency to dishonour and disregard this blessed institution.

1. First of all, while it solemnly forbids fornication, and all promiscuous intercourse of the sexes, it enjoins the union of one man with one woman; and thus, at the very first, demonstrates its perfect correspondence with the will of the God of nature, who creates the sexes in equal numbers, and awakens in them such mutual attachments as distinctly exclude others, leading one to such a choice of another as separates *both* from the rest. This law of one wife to one husband, taught even by the light of nature, shows how such comfort in a common offspring as

meets and satisfies the best and purest affections of the heart, may be fully secured.

Revelation republishes and confirms this law, both by positive statute, and by making it the outward sign of that glorious mystic union between Christ and the Church, in which the whole state, polity, and blessedness of his kingdom originate.

Those wretched enemies of this law, who occasionally gather boldness to advocate their filthy doctrines, and practise their brutal scheme, do but too manifestly contradict nature, divine law, right reason, and the irresistible course of providence: they would, if they might but succeed, cut up human society at the root; for any approaches to this abomination, which have been made in the history of the world, have proved, by the effect, how awfully desolating this course is, and must ever be.

If it be objected, that the law of the Jews permitted polygamy, let it be remembered that it did *no more* than permit it—that it never approved of it, and that, from first to last, both the providence and law of God did in every way discourage it. God gave them a remonstrating toleration in this matter, on account of “the hardness of their hearts;” while, at the same time, he sought to wean them from this injurious practice that had long prevailed among all surrounding nations, and been commonly indulged even among the patriarchs themselves; for he saw that, now when they were about to become an independent Church and nation, and to be a type and

figure of his true Church and holy people in every age, the practice would have unspeakably worse consequences than before.

In the New Testament we observe the same temporary toleration of things not approved of, and for similar reasons. This was the case with many of the Jewish ceremonies after they were abolished by the finished work of Christ; and in respect of polygamy itself, the heathen converts to the gospel were not, at first, absolutely compelled, by the authority of the apostles of Christ, to put away any of their numerous wives, but were only pronounced unfit, on that account, for holding certain offices in the Church.

The evils arising from the practice of polygamy, as exhibited, both in the course of nature, and in the history contained in the divine Word, make it most evident that it has not the approbation of the Supreme Ruler of the world. It has, therefore, always disappeared from all nations to whom the Word of God and the law of righteousness have come. In no nation professing the religion of the Jews — *i.e.*, the true, the Christian religion — is polygamy now either practised or permitted.

2. The marriage union, by the divine law, is *indissoluble*, except for the cause of adultery; that is, where one of the parties has proved unfaithful to the other, in that wherein the very *essence* of the relationship consists. One principal end of marriage being the lawful procreation and holy bringing up

of children—the fruit of mutual affection and care—and adultery being the destruction of this end, it seems to follow, as a necessary consequence, that such infidelity as adultery is should dissolve the marriage *de facto*, as it certainly does *de jure*. In point of fact, it *has* dissolved the union of the parties; and what law and judgment have to do in the matter is simply to declare that this has actually been done, and that, since the crime has been committed against the holiest and tenderest affections of an individual—against solemn pledges and obligations, and against the best interests of society, as well as against the will of God—the innocent sufferer ought to be set free, and the guilty inflicter of the wrong most assuredly punished.

Whether a separation ought to take place on any other account than that of adultery, is a question that deserves, and has received, very serious consideration. We hold that, in strict justice, nothing warrants separation or divorce but a direct breach of the primary law and obligation: yet it should seem, that mercy may sometimes allow separation for other causes. The law of God made such allowances, and permitted divorce for other causes besides. But it was merely in the way of indulgence and forbearance, without giving the sanction of its approbation. Christ declares, that it was so done “because of the hardness of their hearts.” Their hearts were not so subject to every law that proceeded from God as to make it safe in their commonwealth to enforce,

in all its strictness, and in every instance, the original law of justice in this matter; and it should seem that our Lord's doctrine on the subject was intended to bring back the Jews and the world to the original and proper law, as well as to show that God neither excused those dispositions which led to divorces "for other causes," nor those divorces themselves. He plainly teaches, that if one of the parties were to be put away by the other for any cause, except that of adultery, this "should not be done at the pleasure or caprice of the *parties themselves*, but with consent, and by the judgment of the properly constituted authorities.

Hence, I apprehend, the practice is justified which sanctions divorce for wilful and obstinate desertion by one of the parties; because such desertion, evidently arising from hardness of heart, frustrates the one grand end of marriage as effectually as is done by adultery itself. What is taught on this subject by our Lord, seems to be repeated in what Paul lays down in 1 Cor. vii. 15, that if one of the parties *forsake* the other, that other is free.

Let it still further be remarked on what our Lord teaches in Matt. xix., that he does not say Moses *commanded* putting away for any other cause than that of adultery, which the Pharisees seem to have taught; but that, in the exercise of a legislative wisdom and forbearance, in which that great man was directed and authorized by Jehovah, he *suffered* the people to enjoy a greater

liberty. Besides, Christ lays down this, not as a legislator giving law, but as a teacher of morality, explaining a doctrine, and showing what a married man, as a religious and moral man, ought not to do; he decides a question, and declares that no one is warranted to put away his wife, so as to be morally free to marry another, except for fornication. He is not speaking of the departure of one of the parties from the other, as Paul does; but of the one *putting away* the other, and of what justifies this act before God.

The statute of Moses, to which the Pharisees referred, when they put the question to our Lord, is found in Deut. xxiv. 1-4. And when we turn to it, we perceive that it does *not command* the man to put away his wife for the cause there mentioned; but only provides that if, through hardness of heart, he do put her away, he shall give into her hand a writing of divorce. It thus seems to imply that she might be married to another man—though, in that case, it does not appear that the man might be married to another woman. The whole case as put by Moses is hypothetical, and he pronounces that if such a divorce shall take place, and the woman shall have married another man, the first husband shall never be permitted to take her back again. Our Lord, therefore, does not alter the law, but only frees it from the false glosses that had been put upon it by the Pharisees—a service to the law in general which he had often to render, as may

be seen by referring to his whole sermon on the mount.

3. The divine law does not permit marriage within certain degrees of natural relationship or consanguinity. The reasons for this seem to be twofold—*1st*, Physical: Both nature and reason clearly prove, that the offspring of marriages between persons of the same parentage, and of the same blood, rapidly degenerate, both in their bodily and mental constitution. Peculiarities of form and stature are almost certain in such circumstances to become more and more aggravated; and inequalities to increase to such an extent as to be incompatible at length with the even balance of power in the same community. In like manner, peculiar taints and tendencies to disease are apt to become more concentrated and virulent by being propagated equally from both parents—which law of propagation seems also to operate injuriously on the mental constitution, as seems to be proved both by history and observation. *2d*, Moral: Family vices arising from constitution, or instruction, or example, descend with double force on the progeny; and those who, by their nearness of blood, are brought frequently into each other's company in youth, would, if aware that marriage was not forbidden to them, have their virtue too much exposed and tried; and thus licentious intercourse might be brought within the family circle itself. It is of the very highest consequence to morals that there should be enclosures of sanctity, in which both males and females, from their

earliest years, may hold a fellowship, into which the idea of sexual intercourse should never enter. This seems necessary to the very existence of purity, not only in these circles themselves, but in the whole wide compass of society, which is thus made to perceive the power of pure affections to restrain and control the strongest bodily appetites.

4. The law prohibits marriage between persons of a *different religious belief*. Israelites might not marry idolaters. And even after they had sinfully married them, they were obliged to put them away. (Ezra x.) An apostle also forbids the being unequally yoked, “believers with unbelievers.” (2 Cor. vi. 16.) The very nature of marriage shows the wisdom of this rule; for it is the union, not of bodies only, but also and chiefly of minds, and souls, and hearts. A different religion may make and keep up, and is likely so to do, such a separation in these highest respects, as is utterly incompatible with complete union. The effect of such a union upon the progeny, on the subject of religion, which, when genuine, is the most commanding of all influences, must be obvious to every one; while the want of it must, on the other hand, prove most injurious. Discord here will spread through the whole circle. It will prevent all holy and salutary exercises of religion in the family. Neither the same worship nor the same morality can in that case be taught and exemplified by both parents; nor can connubial or parental love enjoy all their complacency or pro-

duce all their happy fruit in children growing up in the likeness of both parents, who must equally desire to see the image of themselves in those that have sprung from them. Where this happens, marriage can be no true figure of the union between Christ and his Church, and this union no model for that of marriage.

We see not, therefore, why a Christian State should not forbid the marriage of those whose professed discordant religious faith insures the most injurious consequences, at once to their posterity and the commonwealth; and why it might not refuse them the privileges which it accords to those who enter into so close a union with the same mind, and faith, and principles.

5. In a Christian society, one grand end of marriage being the *bringing up of children to God*, for his service in time and eternity, marriage should not take place, nor be permitted, till both parties have acquired such knowledge of God and of their duty as qualifies them for the instruction and training of their children, “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” The command given to parents in Israel to teach their children the law of the Lord, implies this at least, that they themselves had been taught to know it; while the example of Abraham, and the divine commendation given to it, furnish proof that this will of God is also a law, and ought to be recognised as such by a Christian jurisprudence.

6. By the same law young persons might not marry *without the consent of their parents*. This law is founded on the principle that marriage ought not to be the result of mere passion, but also of judgment and discretion; and that youth require the counsels of their wiser parents in a matter of such unspeakable importance to their well-being.

7. It would appear that God's people were not permitted to marry till they had a reasonable prospect of being able to support themselves, and also the children which might be the fruit of their union. The law of *dowries* seems to have been enacted chiefly with this view, and to secure this object.

Such are the proved evils to personal and social happiness, to temporal and eternal interests, from injudicious, premature, and unprovided-for marriages, as well as from unwise laws regarding that relationship, that it becomes the sacred duty of statesmen and politicians to study the *divine law and history* on the whole subject. Marriage lies at the foundation of all domestic peace and virtue—of all good and sound education—of all healthful and happy government. Vice, ignorance, turbulence, cruelty, and a thousand untold distresses, arise out of a disregard of this primary element of all society. We may rest assured that as the parents are, so will the children also generally be—with this only difference, that the innate depravity of the children will lead them commonly to surpass the wicked deeds of their guilty and ill-matched parentage.

SECTION V.

TEMPORAL SUPPORT OF RELIGION.

*An order of Men to Minister—The Levites set apart
—Cities and Tithes allotted them—Principle of this
always binding—The kind and amount reasonable—
Wisdom of it—Special Provision for the Priests—
The Hereditary Offices and Rights of the Levites and
Priests—Exceptions—Typical intention of this Order
—Lessons which this subject teaches Statesmen.*

As religion is unquestionably the highest interest of man, and necessary to the realization of all the benefits of society, the right maintenance of its offices must be expected to form part of the divine law, and to be ordered by the best provisions which divine wisdom can make; and since it cannot subsist without ministers and ordinances requiring outward and temporal sustenance and regulation, the law is as clear and positive on this as on any other subject of like importance. For this purpose it introduces and applies great principles, exhibiting the depth of God's own wisdom, the absolute propriety which he has in all persons and things, and the regard which he has

to the temporal well-being and eternal salvation of fallen man.

In prosecution of this grand object, God set apart the tribe of Levi for the special services of education and religion—that is, he appointed about the thirteenth part to serve all the rest in these and such like capacities. An attentive consideration of the wants of society will be sufficient to satisfy any one that this proportion is neither too great nor too small. It was the official duty of that tribe to take charge of all the sacred things pertaining to the service of God, of the written authenticated copies of the law, and of the sacred books (Deut. xxxi. 9, xvii. 18); to transcribe the divine Word, and to multiply copies of it according to the numbers and necessities of the people, and to teach and explain it to all. (Deut. xxxi. 11–13; Mal. ii. 4–7.) In all questions and disputes they had to show and declare what was the law regarding them. (Deut. xix. 17, xxi. 5.) They had, as it should seem, the practice of the healing art. (Lev. xiii. and xiv.) They were intrusted with the keeping of the genealogies of all the families, and with the registers of all the properties in Israel. They had devolved upon them the constant and arduous duties connected with the offering of sacrifices for all the people, and for conducting the divine worship in the tabernacle and temple. In other words, they were ministers of religion, transcribers of the sacred books, and expounders of the doctrines of religion and the laws

of morality; they were the ordinary judges; they had the charge of all the public records of the nation; and out of them were supplied, as it should seem, the faculties of surgery and medicine. They thus filled up what are commonly called the learned professions. (2 Chron. xvii. 8, 9, xxxv. 3; Neh. viii. 7, 8; Deut. xxxiii. 10.)

As most of these services required their presence in all parts of the land, forty-eight cities were allotted and secured to them, among the other twelve tribes, which were called cities of the Levites, and specifically named at the first division of the territory. Thus, by their dwelling together, they animated one another in their peculiar studies and pursuits; and by their being so scattered, they had easy access to all the people, as all the people had to them. Ministers for the service of the synagogues, and teachers for the villages around, could thence be easily procured; while schools or colleges in their cities could be readily attended by the more advanced youth of the neighbourhoods, for whom a higher education was sought. The people could thus also, without difficulty, have recourse to the Levites for the determination of questions of law, for desirable counsel, and for copies of the Scriptures; in a word, for all the important purposes for which they were appointed.

It is difficult to conceive a better arrangement than this, either for the Levites themselves, or for the body of the people, while we cannot doubt of its

having been ordained as the best way, and as a model for the somewhat similar arrangements which have approved themselves to, and been adopted by, the most enlightened Christian States.

The manner in which they were maintained was appointed by the same supreme authority, and may therefore be regarded as most wise, and just, and good; intended to teach and inculcate, at the very least, the grand principles on which God would have all nations that profess to worship him to proceed in regard to this subject.

The law of this department seems not to have been submitted to the administration of the civil power, so as to be enforced by civil pains or penalties, but to have been given directly to the people themselves, who were accountable for their observance or neglect of it only to God himself and his providence. It was, therefore, and still is, the law of God to his Church, and is binding on the consciences of his people, to whom he gives life, and breath, and all things.

In setting up the commonwealth of Israel, God not only directed that the priests and Levites should have the cities we have referred to, but also suburbs around them of considerable extent, the whole produce of which should be their property. They were thus so far identified or brought into sympathy with the rest of the people in their dependence on the soil, and even on the occupations of husbandry, and had space in which might be preserved and stored

what, at the proper seasons, was brought to them from the people.

The Levites, as distinguished from the priests of the house of Aaron, had, however, their chief support from the *tithes* or tenth-parts of all the fruits of the land, and of the cattle, over the whole kingdom. And this they had by a title as real and inalienable as that by which the other tribes held theirs. They were in no sense a burden either on the soil or on the nation.

If the tenth part thus went to the maintenance of about the thirteenth or fourteenth part of the population, the Levites, one might suppose, must have had a somewhat greater share than the rest. But when we consider that the tithes were not paid by compulsion of civil law, and that much of them must have been, at all times, withheld, we cannot regard the provision for them as too great or excessive. Besides, it was highly proper, when we consider their education and employments, that they should be upheld in comparative ease and comfort, and have the means, like their brethren, of exercising an exemplary charity. We are confident, that in no well-ordered community is less than this proportion reaped by the learned professions, or should less be offered to them.

The wisdom of such a law appears in this, that those who ministered to the highest and most essential interests of the people, were not made entirely dependent on voluntary offerings, nor were they

mere stipendiaries; and while they were not permitted to damage their own legitimate influence on the one hand, they could not oppress the people by illegal or exorbitant demands on the other. Then, again, the people were reminded—at every season of additions to the number of their cattle, and the gathering in of the fruits of their fields—of the law of their God, which bound them to recognise and reciprocate the benefits which he had provided for them—as well as of the title by which they held what they called their own, but what is always truly the property of God. The Levites were bound to labour continually for the best interests of the people, and the people again for the comfort of the Levites—the one ministered to the other in spiritual, and these again to them in carnal things. There was thus kept up an interchange of such good offices in the whole body as are most necessary to the unity and concord of a Church, or nation. No fault can be found with this law except by those blinded men who regard intellectual, moral, and religious interests as comparatively trifling, or, at least, as exceedingly inferior to mere animal and temporal life. Let but the exalted nature of the soul and its immortality be taken into account, and then this law will appear worthy of God to enact, and of man cheerfully to obey.

The priests of the house of Aaron, who was of the tribe of Levi, were entirely devoted to the service of Religion. The greater part of them had to reside constantly beside the ark, in the tabernacle first, and

afterwards in the temple at Jerusalem, where they offered sacrifices and conducted the daily worship, as well as that of the grand concourse of the people at the solemn annual festivals. They therefore required some special and appropriate provision; and hence, besides the suburbs of their cities, they had the tithe of the tithes paid to the Levites and parts of certain offerings by the people, according to statute law, as well as free-will offerings. (Lev. vi., vii.; Numb. xviii. 26-28; Deut. xviii. 3.) They had the first-fruits of corn, wine, oil, and wool; and the redemption-money —five shekels paid for every first-born of man and of unclean animals. Serving at the altar, they lived on the things of the altar. They needed this; and the Church of God required to be taught, by this means, the grand principle and rule of a divinely appointed sustentation of his ministers through all generations. We need scarcely remind the reader that the apostle Paul adopts this rule for the times of the gospel.

The Positive Law, which makes the learned professions hereditary in the tribe of Levi, seems to proceed in harmony with the law of nature. When a right moral and political state of things exists, the son generally partakes of the tastes and habits, as well as the principles, of the father, and is, therefore, disposed to imitate and follow his pursuits and occupations. When all these are right and good, the benefits resulting from this law are numerous and important. The good education by the parents,

in the tribe of Levi, could not fail to initiate the children into their intellectual and religious tastes—mixing as they did, from their earliest years, with what we might call the best society. They had also the benefit of their fathers' experience, while their intercourse with others prevented their falling into a narrow and sectarian spirit. They had all the profit, and nothing of the evil, which usually attaches to collegiate or monastic institutions. Their cities were universities, in which all the family affections and duties were kept in constant exercise, and the activities of ordinary life mingled with the pursuits of literature, science, and theology. Indeed, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion, that this is the happiest method that can be thought of for securing among a people an education of the best kind, and that in the highest degree.

It ought, at the same time, to be remembered, that the law to which we refer did not positively exclude individuals of other tribes, who might be led by their talents and tastes, or fitted and called by God, in his providence, from performing some of the functions which properly belonged to the tribe of Levi.

Besides, it cannot be doubted that the law was intended to show, first to the Jews, and then to all the Christian world, the unchangeable Priesthood of the Messiah; for though the individual priests were not allowed to continue, by reason of death, yet the priesthood itself, in the family of Aaron, like the royalty in the family of David, was not to cease till

the Messiah should be born, and the type realized in the Antitype.

In what respects, and to what extent, the law was intended for the guidance of Christian States, deserves serious consideration. The fact that, in the religious sense, this law merged, and had its concentration in the priesthood of Christ, sets the ministrations of religion free from any such restrictions as to birth and parentage. Accordingly, our Lord seems to have selected apostles, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, without any reference to tribe, or family, or natural descent; only confining his choice at first to the *nation* of the Jews. He next, in his providence over that people, and in consequence of their inveterate unbelief, dispersed and confounded them in such a manner, as that the descendants of Levi and Aaron could no longer be certainly known. His ministers of religion after that are chosen as his Church is—out of every nation, and kindred, and people, and tongue. All his people he makes kings and priests unto God, even the Father. In a high and very excellent sense, he appoints them to teach and serve one another; to give faith, obedience, and worship to God through him, the Anointed of the Father; and he foretells a time when “they shall not teach every man his neighbour and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know him, from the least to the greatest.”

He therefore does not abrogate the law by this, but only lets out and extends its grand principle, in

the same manner in which he acted with respect to the true religion itself after his exaltation—making it to spread out from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. This was done by the instrumentality of the Jews themselves—most of whom rejected it; and the few who believed, being also rejected of their countrymen, were sent to the Gentiles, and commanded to go everywhere preaching the gospel. He, as Prophet, Priest, and King of the true Israel, qualifies, appoints, and sends whom he will, to serve as he pleases. All is merged in, as all proceeds from, himself; and now he gives to his Church universal the old laws in their fulness, changing nothing but their forms and the limits of their operation, making them embrace the whole world.

As to the instruction derivable from this law by Christian politicians and statesmen, we may remark, that they ought to encourage or support, in the learned professions, none but those who are qualified, by disposition, character, and acquirements, for the offices of religion, learning, and jurisprudence; that they are bound to take care, that the means which God has appointed be devoted to the purpose of furnishing suitable education for the persons who are to fill such offices; that all encouragement be given by them to the setting up of sufficient schools and colleges, and to their being properly appointed and maintained; that due trial be made of the qualifications of all who are authorized to be instructors, guides, and judges of their fellow-men; that none

be supported or encouraged in this holy work, but such as are of the true religion, and authorized by the law of God; that such as are so authorized and qualified be protected in their rights, and in the discharge of those functions to which God has called them; and that they interfere in no manner in the services which have been committed to them by the express will of "the King of kings." The saying of our Lord to his apostles: "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me," applies with no less force to rulers and law-givers than to private individuals. The interference of the Jewish rulers with Christ and his servants was awfully resented by him; and the instance of his judgment stands on record, to warn those who fill such distinguished offices against any similar treatment of him and of his ministers to all succeeding generations.

SECTION VI.

ADMINISTRATION OF JUDICIAL LAW.

Responsibility to Supreme Power—Responsibility to Powers which are of God—Such Powers must act on the Law of God, and for the same End—Punishments—Their Principle, Justice—Offences Punished with Death—Mercy—Vindication of the Law—Its Permanence.

In all societies of creatures capable of knowing that there is a Power over them, and what the will of that Power is, there must be responsibility to that same Power. Obedience is the correspondence of the will and actions of these creatures with the will of that Power; while disobedience is the want of such correspondence. The pleasure or displeasure of the Power follows as a necessary consequence; and, as the grand office of power is government, so one necessary act of government is the signification of that pleasure or displeasure by a corresponding exercise of it. In other words, it is such a power rewarding or punishing, as the case may be. Without this no practical distinction can be recognised

between the judgments of right and wrong, either with reference to God or man.

God, the supreme power, thus signifies his pleasure or displeasure in the present world, through what we call the dispensations of his providence over all things. And he, having formed man in his own image, part of which consists in power and dominion, has committed to human governments the charge of dispensing rewards and punishments, but only on the same principles that he himself dispenses them. For this reason specially, in his oracles he calls human judges “*gods.*” (Ps. lxxxii. 1, 6.)

The expressions of the will of human power are to be found in laws to which penalties for transgression are annexed. These laws and penalties ought, unquestionably, to be derived from, and in harmony with, the laws and penalties which God has promulgated, and carries into execution in his own government of the world. By human governments, those ought to be held, as well-doers or evil-doers, who are so reckoned by him. Rulers among men are, therefore, to be “*a terror to evil-doers, and a praise to them that do well;*” otherwise there is tyranny, or anarchy, abhorrent both to God and man.

The rewards for *well-doing* are, in the apostle’s language, expressed by the term “*praise,*” to signify benignant regards, careful protection, sure defence, and advancement in comfort and happiness; and this, after the example of that divine providence to which humble and faithful servants of God look up with

trust and confidence, enjoying a constant peace, and resting in the assurance of the ever-watchful care of their great Master.

1. The “*terror*” of rulers to evil-doers consists, first, in their stedfast and fearless administration of righteous and good laws—which of itself, from its own rectitude and majesty, creates fear in the conscience of even the most wicked.

2. In the infliction of positive pain or punishment, withdrawing from transgressors the benefits which they had previously conferred; or actually laying upon them the burden of sufferings corresponding with the nature of the offence, and the ordinations of just laws; or, in other words, corresponding with the eternal rules of justice and righteousness.

And, since the principles and infallible rules of *justice* ought not to be left to the ever-varying opinions, judgments, or customs of men, but should be sought for in the law given, in the rules observed, and in the examples set by the supreme lawgiver, it becomes the duty of Christians to ascertain and act upon what the divine Word declares on this important and difficult subject.

When we survey the justice of God, and the penalties for transgression he has prescribed in the Scriptures, we find the principle lying at the foundation of all to be, that an offender against law must either make compensation, by rendering an equivalent for his offence—that is, by replacing what

his transgression has taken away, or restoring all things to the state in which they were before he transgressed; or, if that be impossible, that he must forfeit all opportunity of offending in like manner, and be made to suffer the very thing which his conduct was intended to make the innocent suffer.

This principle seems to be the basis of all the punishments affixed to transgression by the Divine Being. It is set forth in the expression, "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." (Exod. xxi. 23-25.) It is taking from the transgressor an equivalent for the injury he has done, and making him lose that of which he sought to deprive another.

In this way only can we identify punishment with justice, which is a "rendering to every man according to his works." Thus, when one individual takes away the life of another, not by accident, but intention, he forfeits his own life to justice, which demands the forfeiture: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." Not to punish the murderer with death may be mercy, but it is not justice, either in the judgment of natural conscience, or in that of the law of God.

The whole scheme of redemption proceeds upon this principle, and gloriously illustrates and confirms it. That is restored by Christ—restored to God—which not He, but men whom he saves, had taken away. The rebellious and unjust deserved to die, and must have died under the stroke of divine justice, had not the just One submitted himself to jus-

tice, and died in their stead. Indeed, the proper law of punishment appears nowhere so clear and legible as in the light of God's redeeming mercy to our fallen world—which redemption shows him to be “just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus.” The sin of Adam aimed at the very sovereignty or life of God, and at the very being of his government of the world. It was, at all events, the extinction of the life which God had breathed into him, and which he was bound to keep and use for the service and glory of his Maker; so that his conduct was morally the spiritual murder of himself and his posterity—all whose spiritual, and consequently temporal life also, he by his transgression really took away. His whole life, therefore, he forfeited to justice; and, had not the Son of God offered himself in his room, the whole race must have actually perished for ever, having no means of averting the righteous punishment.

Transgressions of the law of property are on this principle punished by the demand for restitution, which is compensative to him who has suffered from theft or robbery, together with such additions as are necessary to indemnify him for the loss he may have temporarily sustained, and for the trouble he may have had in obtaining redress of his wrong. Thus, by the law of God, a thief was compelled to restore fourfold.

Those offences, again, which consist in destroying the virtue, order, or happiness of society—those

acts which are directed against what is essential to the *well-being* of all around—and for which no sacrifice of personal service, no payment of money, no loss of liberty, can compensate, are to be punished with death; that is, with the forfeiture of the power which has been so abused, that the individual may never be able to repeat the crime. Thus treason, adultery, blasphemy, &c., are by the divine law visited with capital punishment, because they are directed against the very first principles of law, government, and society, whether these be human or divine.

This law of punishment, which is that of strict justice, leaves room, however, for the exercise of *Mercy* on the part of the Sovereign Power. It is exceedingly to the honour of that Power itself, and also of its justice, to extend mercy to the offender whosoever mercy does not defeat, but rather contributes to, the very ends and glory of that justice. Thus mercy may be, and often is, extended to the guilty, in perfect consistency with the claims and honours of justice, as in the most illustrious instance of the divine mercy to sinners through Jesus Christ..

In the criminal and judicial law of the Jews, we are struck not only with the clear principle to which we have referred, but also, and even still more, with the number of offences to which it affixed the punishment of death. Among these were Sabbath-breaking (Exod. xxxv. 2; Numb. xv. 32); idolatry, (Exod. xxxii. 27); devoting children to Moloch (Lev. xx. 2); cursing parents (Lev. xx. 9); adultery

(Lev. xx. 10); incest (Lev. xx. 11); bestiality (Lev. xx. 15, 16); witchcraft (Lev. xx. 6, 27); whoredom in a priest's daughter (Lev. xxi. 9); blasphemy (Lev. xxiv. 10–16); murder (Lev. xxiv. 17); daring presumptuous disobedience (Numb. xv. 30, 31; Deut. xvi. 12.)—an example of it in Numb. xvi., *passim*; killing sacrifices privately, and not in the appointed place (Lev. xvii. 4, 8, 9); eating blood (Lev. xvii. 10, 14); prophesying falsely (Deut. xiii. 5, xviii. 20); enticing to idolatry (Deut. xiii. 6–11); stubborn rebellion against a father (Deut. xxi. 18–21); not being found a virgin at marriage (Deut. xxii. 21); stealing an Israelite to sell him (Deut. xxiv. 7).

In all these cases there is an obvious violation of the most sacred and intimate bonds that bind men to God, and to each other; on which bonds all religion and morality essentially depend. The law, therefore, declared the offenders in these points worthy of death.

Such strict justice in criminal law is right on two accounts—

1. Because it is of the very essence of law to enjoin what is purely right, and absolutely to prohibit what is wrong. Hence, the divine law is characterized as holy, just, and good; not holy and good in the sense of these two attributes qualifying or modifying the other, but that it is perfectly holy, *and* just, *and* good, at the same time, and in equal degree.

2. Because in this way it holds up continually, before all men, the rule and example of perfect righteousness, both in its enactments and penalties. Who does not see that it would be most injurious were law in any way to overlook or confound right and wrong—injurious even to the very moral sense of men, and, therefore, deeply so to the order and peace of society; and that the law with its penalties ought to stand forth as the perfect model and rule of justice, to which all may look and appeal, for the determination of all questions of right and wrong? Criminal law, especially, ought to be purely and strictly just.

This perfect strictness is entirely *consistent* with such an exercise of mercy and indulgence as is required among the erring children of men, to whom the absolute and uniform application of such penalties would often prove positively fatal, as we have already seen. It might not unfrequently happen, that every individual composing a nation has, at one time or other, in some one point or other, been guilty of transgression, so that the infliction of the just punishment on every one deserving it would cut off the whole nation. Therefore in the administration of criminal law among the Jews, and that by appointment of God, a prompt and striking example of the punishment of capital offences was made at the first; and, in very aggravated cases, from time to time afterwards—in order, as it seems, to show to the whole people what was the proper

course of law and justice—that they might have a constant warning and admonition, and be made to feel how much they were indebted to mercy and long-suffering. We may here refer to the case of Sabbath-breaking. By the law it was punishable with *death*; and yet, so far as we read, only *one* instance occurred, and that at the beginning, of this punishment being actually inflicted. And yet, long afterwards, Nehemiah threatened *imprisonment* for the same offence; not that he thus altered the law, which still remained unrepealed and unmodified, but only by divine authority mitigated the punishment, for the reason we have just assigned. To execute the law at that time in all its strictness, would have been to extirpate the greater part of the people.

The history of the Jews gives no account of the actual infliction of capital punishment for many of the offences which the law had set down as deserving it. Though such transgressions must often have been committed, and been passed over, yet the law, we know, remained unchanged—proclaiming to all generations what such crimes merit, and what the perpetrators who are spared owe to compassion and mercy.

The view which we have just taken of this subject *vindicates*, if vindication were needed, the divine law from the aspersion so often cast upon it by superficial, ignorant, or infidel minds, of its being extremely severe, or even cruel and unjust. For as

religion and morals are unquestionably things of the highest importance to man, both as an immortal being, and as a member of this world's society, so it became the divine Lawgiver clearly to mark out all moral distinctions, both by statute and penalty, and to give as decided expression to his knowledge of justice and his love for it, as to his hatred of whatever is wrong. His law, therefore, being purely just, cannot be cruel, because cruelty is essentially an injustice. There cannot, for instance, be a higher crime against God or against society, than to deny, blaspheme, or withstand the very Being "in whom we live and move, and have *our* being." If there be any crime worthy of death, this is that crime; and therefore God himself, both in his law and providence, punishes sin universally with death: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." And this is not cruelty, but justice only. If, therefore, he is pleased to enjoin a law which punishes with death an atheist, or a blasphemer, or a notorious rebel against his government, that is not a cruel, but only a holy, just, and good law, even with respect to men who receive it.

How monstrous a thing is it for any one to advocate a liberty, nay, right, to deny or blaspheme the Creator of all things, and even his own Maker! What could be said of the man who should insist on a perfect immunity for denying, vilifying, and trampling on the laws of his rightful sovereign? Such a one, by the consent of all, deserves

to be driven beyond the bounds of his nation, and to have all means of communicating with its inhabitants, and enjoying its privileges, removed out of his power for ever.

Or, if we take the case of adultery, the history of many nations proves that they regarded and treated it as deserving death. It is also clear, that the unvitiated sense of right and wrong in human nature prescribes the very same punishment; since the jealousy of the husband instantly prompts him to destroy the life of the man whom he finds violating the sanctity of his marriage bed. The same natural sense of justice in the minds of human lawgivers, has led them to hold the husband excused, who has inflicted death on him whom he finds in the guilty act. Of such importance to religion and morals, to peace and happiness, is faithfulness to the marriage relation, that God, both in the law which he has written on the conscience of men, and in the Book of Revelation, has guarded and defended it by the very highest penalty. It is a thousand times more cruel for a man to practise, or for a government to overlook this crime, than to punish it with death; for the taking away of a life cannot, for atrocity, be put in comparison with the destruction of virtue, and peace, and family ties.

The same remark will apply with like force to all other cases set down in the judicial law, especially when we consider that the law, as became it, guarded with utmost watchfulness, the very first

approaches of any essential injury to religion and morality. In this it furnishes a striking contrast to the legislation of mere human wisdom, which expends its care and vigilance on what is merely temporal and political. It does not, like the divine law, proceed upon the lofty ground, that “righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.”

Let it be remembered also, in this connection, that, though the laws in question are such as we have described, they were not always executed—that the execution of them was often prevented or delayed on account of the natural affections and compassion of those who were injured, and who had a right to complain and demand justice—on account of the prerogative of mercy in the rulers, or of the divine long-suffering. The examples of God’s providence over that nation, when it transgressed his law, serve in no small degree to instruct the administrators of criminal law as to the time and manner in which mercy should be shown. That providence long spared the transgressing nation of Israel. It visited them with vengeance, indeed, but with mitigated vengeance, and never utterly destroyed them. It did not at once, and with the utmost rigour, execute justice on that people, any more than it does upon the rest of the world; and yet it gave, and still gives, sufficient proofs of its being always unchanged and vigilant; thus furnishing to rulers whom it had set up, and into whose hands it had put the law, a glorious

rule for its administration—and, we may add, a rule recommending itself to all nations which possess the Word of God, who know what he does, and what he would have those to do who own him as their God.

That the civil magistrate has to do with the *first table* of the law, is clearly proved from the subject now under consideration, many of those offences which were punishable with death, being transgressions of that table. It will not do to say that the rule does not apply to Christian States, since the Jews were under a theocracy. No doubt they were so; but it is equally true of Christian States, that they also are under a theocracy. And then again, this theocracy must be understood as always conducted on eternal and unchangeable principles of right and wrong. It is a very model of government to men—it was always carried on through the instrumentality of men, and over the persons of men. It was a terror to evildoers, and a praise to them that did well; and this is precisely what magistrates under the gospel are commanded to be.

By many who have paid no attention to the subject, or who have formed erroneous conceptions of its nature, much ridicule has been cast on the capital offence of *witchcraft*. It ought to be understood, that under the general term of witchcraft, were included all the designs, arts, and practices of magic, charms, fortune-telling, and the like. The punishment of death which has been inflicted even in enlightened

Christian States on those who were guilty, or even believed to have been guilty, of this offence, has met with many a sneer, to which the Mosaic law must also be regarded as exposed. It would have been much better if the shafts of ridicule had been spared till men had considered how the case really stood. It matters little, in this question, whether the persons accused of the offence really have or have not a power above the operation of ordinary natural laws. If they *think* they have such power, or employ means to obtain it, or if they wish and endeavour to make others believe that they actually have it, it is obvious, that should they be successful, first of all in producing such a belief in the minds of others, and then in turning it to their own purposes of securing gain, inspiring fear, or inflicting revenge, it is a crime of very great magnitude against God and against society. It is evidently fitted to subvert all faith in the supreme providence of God. It withdraws men from the direction and control of laws, both human and divine. It places society at the mercy of those who practise such arts, and it sets up the dominion of a terror of unseen, invisible, un-divine powers, wielded at the pleasure of a fellow-mortal. It therefore cannot fail to prove a constant source of crime and misery. It is, moreover, a practical blasphemy against God, and an outrage on all religion, law, civilization, and happiness. We might refer to the wretched state in which great tribes in Africa, for example, are constantly kept by

rain-makers, and the like, who resemble so many infernal powers walking among the people, and keeping them tremblingly subject to their horrid will and purposes.

No State in which such practices abound, can ever be prosperous or peaceful. The duty of rulers is, therefore, to encourage the spread of that light of divine truth which banishes such darkness, and to hold as deserving the punishment of death those who continue obstinately and wickedly to follow such practices. This is a duty they owe to those under them, whose weakness and ignorance expose them to be the easy prey of such malignant or cunning propagators of a belief in such supernatural power.

Without enlarging on this great subject of punishment, we shall only further remark, that a careful study of all the particular statutes of the Mosaic law in this department, together with a knowledge of those forms and circumstances of society in the Jewish nation, and among the people around it, which gave occasion to the development and application of the great principles of eternal justice, will not fail to satisfy the mind of a true inquirer as to their unchangeable rectitude, and their power of universal adaptation. It will also show it to be the will of God, that these principles should be recognised and applied by all nations who would be loyal to him, and who would, at the same time, willingly subserve the perfection and glory of his supreme government.

For what purpose, will any one tell, does the record of these things stand fixed in his statute-book—if not thus to teach and bind the nations of the world? Or otherwise how should men be able, either to interpret aright his moral government, or avoid the guilt of viewing his laws as essentially arbitrary, temporary, and changing? How could they escape one of the sorest evils to every government, namely, the opinion so apt to prevail, either that there is no fixed, eternal rule of justice existing; or, which amounts to the same thing, that such a rule is nowhere to be found, and cannot be certainly known?

SECTION VII.

CONCLUSION.

The grand truths and principles we have been considering, stripped of their typical references and initial and transient forms, might be conceived as being built up into a practical experiment or national institute. Without violence offered to reason or faith, we might imagine a Christian people, taking possession of a new, uninhabited country, or emerging from the anarchy of some overwhelming revolution, or by force of conviction made willing to relinquish all previous legal rights and arrangements, prepared to construct a religious and civil polity out of these principles, and guided by the grand features of the Jewish economy ; and to have it as thoroughly pervaded as that economy was with the authority of God, with faith in his providence, and with zeal for the advancement of his glory. This, we think, would be no mad or vain attempt on their part, but a thing altogether natural. It would be no more than a consistent, dutiful effort to ascertain from the infallible oracles of the living God, what are the eternal laws of right and wrong in all things practical, and then to reduce them to the express purposes for which God intended them.

At some future time, we may endeavour, if it so please God, to sketch somewhat in detail the ideal of a Christian commonwealth, set up and conducted on those principles—that is, pervaded with true religion, controlled by divine law, regulated by a divine polity, and blessed with the smiles of divine providence; and we shall not be afraid of its presenting an aspect of less wisdom, nobleness, and felicity, than that of the so-called glorious kingdoms or empires, either of ancient or modern times, or of its being less wonderful in the eyes of surrounding nations than were God's ancient people in their day.

Looking at what we may call the natural effect of such a constitution and operation of things, it becomes manifest that such a nation must be wholly separated by God and by its own will to his service, worshipping him according to his word, living in obedience to his laws, and warranted to trust to the kindness and defence of his providence.

It must needs be intelligent, well-instructed in divine, moral, and economical truth, and therefore lifted up to high capacities and opportunities for the study and attainment of all subordinate science and literature.

Being neither extravagantly rich nor miserably poor, its inhabitants are free from all strong temptations to oppress on the one hand, and to envy on the other—to feel independent of God, or to murmur at the entireness of their dependence. It is therefore united, contented, and blessed with the strength of

union in God, and in universal attachment to the same things and to one another.

It possesses great security under the protection of the Almighty's wings. It may, indeed, be hated and envied by surrounding nations, but it will, at the same time, be also feared and respected; its enemies will be made to see and feel that God is in it of a truth, and will dread it on account of its exaltation in righteousness, justice, and judgment.

If any are rash enough to assail it, it is found too mighty for them—they are made to feel that it stands on its defence with a wonderfully unanimous courage, that the events of providence favour it, and that it gains singular victories, like those of Gideon of old; and in recent times of Great Britain, in her wars with the whole of Continental Europe, while she was still the Protestant country of Europe, and, like Israel, the only country protesting for the true faith. It loves peace and peaceful arts, and peace with all men; yet stands prepared to defend all that God has given it to keep, trusting in the mighty Lord, who is on its side, and not fearing the wrath of its enemies, however numerous and mighty they may be. This proposition has been illustrated in ancient times by the Jewish history, and in modern ages by the history of the Waldenses, and those of the English Commonwealth and the days of the Scottish Covenant.

It has, moreover, a position still nobler than that of strength for its defence. It sends abroad over

the world a great and beneficial influence. Its character and happiness cannot fail to be observed far and near. Its principles and actings are naturally inquired into, and in some measure learned and understood. The advantage of adopting and imitating them becomes apparent; and what is more, the natural conscience of men is made at length to approve of the high moral excellence to which it has attained.

It is thus beneficent to the world by its example; but it farther extends the blessings it enjoys, by the willing and charitable efforts it makes, in love to God and man, and in obedience to the law of the Gospel, to communicate to all whatsoever things are true, honest, lovely, and of good report. In all its transactions with other states, it confirms this influence by the observance of strict honesty, justice, kindness, and fidelity, fulfilling punctually all its engagements, even when they are found to be to its loss.

In a word, it benefits the world in the same way as a noble Christian man who orders his own affairs nearly to perfection, and who, ready to help all others, blesses his whole neighbourhood; or, in the language of the Saviour, “it makes its light so to shine before men, that they, seeing its good works, glorify the Father who is in heaven.”

It thus becomes, not only in its religious, but also in its civil character, a great missionary institute in the midst of the world; a living epistle of Christ, as King of nations and of saints, known and read of

all peoples; exhibiting a godliness which is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

When the Almighty Spirit of God, according to his eternal purpose and decree, shall be poured out—as is announced—on nations and kingdoms, he will doubtless make no small use of an instrumentality like this, for fully introducing and permanently establishing the universal reign of the Son of God. The millennial glory of the latter days will, we doubt not, come forth in this way, and be no more than the complete development of the scheme, which only began with the Jewish nation, and has been perfected and expanded by the Messiah, so as to comprehend and gather into one, all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues.

It is not to be doubted, that the faith of the nation we speak of will be exposed to many trials and many temptations, fitted to make it fall from its stedfastness, to slacken its diligence, tarnish the lustre of its character, and circumscribe the extent and force of its influence. Its members still partake of fallen human nature, and are subject to like passions with other men. They are exposed for a season to the deteriorating effect, and to the allurements and hatred of an unconverted world. They may be expected to meet for a while with strong inducements to depart from the living God, and adopt carnal expedients to avert present evils. In a word, at the commencement, or soon after the

commencement, of this course, their fidelity may be tried to the utmost. Yet, we doubt not that their **holy** and obedient attempt thus to honour the **Anointed** of God, being a sign of his approaching triumphs over darkness and sin, will be specially honoured and crowned; that grace will be granted in extraordinary measure; that the power of Satan will be remarkably bound; and that the providence of Christ, which is over all, will wonderfully restrain all hostile movements of those who are still their enemies. He will make a fear of them to fall on all men, whilst they are declaring the truth and works of God.

Surveying in anticipation the progress of this Christian state, in connection with the fixed laws of Providence, and the clear light of prophecy, we perceive the maturing fruits of Christian doctrine, morality, institutions, and government. The great body of the people are, at least, as distinguished for knowledge, piety, and virtue, as the most eminent disciples of the present day. Pervaded and animated with heavenly tempers, they are full of love to God and man—they are free from envy and resentment—they neither oppress, nor are oppressed: contented with little, they engage in no excessive labours—they hasten not to be so rich as to fall into snares—they are sober and temperate in all things—they are not distracted with excessive cares, nor crushed by disappointment of overweening hopes. Their liberty is not turned to licentiousness, and they are not terrified by the vengeance of violated laws. The

fathers among them bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and seek to provide for those of their own houses, without being burdensome to any; while the children, instead of grieving, honour, obey, help, and comfort their parents. Every habitation is a Bethel. The peaceful arts are cultivated and flourish among them, and chiefly the art of agriculture: “Their swords are beaten into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, and they learn the art of war no more.” Only such occupations are engaged in, and that in such degrees, as are congenial to health, long life, and holy character.

There arises out of all this a constantly increasing and happy population, which, for a long period, finds employment and sustenance in that culture of the land which the law of succession to property insures, till the very desert literally “rejoices and blossoms as the rose.” And when it comes to this, that the limits of their territory can no longer contain them—when they must, as it were, burst forth on every side, they shall go to other lands, not as plagues, but as blessings—not to conquer and spoil by force of arms, nor to spread a moral blight, as emigrants have often done, but to disseminate divine truth, and exhibit before strangers, in a living example, the Gospel and holy Law of Jesus Christ—thus hastening forward the world to recognise and gladly welcome the rising glory of the Sun of Righteousness.

How long a time must elapse before this blessed era shall arrive, it would be presumptuous even to attempt to determine. It would seem, however, as if it were needful to let human wisdom, even under the light of the Gospel, try its utmost strength to rule the world, without directly consulting the all-wise God, to convince men, by fearful consequences and most mournful experience, of the folly of their wisdom and the weakness of their power; and to raise the kingdom of Christ, at last, on the ruin which man's government of man has confessedly wrought.

APPENDIX.

IT is not a little to be wondered at, that the institution and law of the Sabbath should, even by professing Christians, have been treated as if it were inferior in its origin and obligations to the other commandments of the Decalogue—that it should have been represented as arising, not like them, out of the natures and relations of God and man, and out of the relations in which men stand one to another, but out of the more arbitrary and benevolent will of God; and therefore as not inwoven with the constitution of things in our world, as not essential to a right state of our moral constitution, and as capable of being blotted out of the statute-book of heaven, without great damage to the other laws of God, or to the interests of the world.

Such views and opinions have no foundation, either in right reason or in the Holy Scriptures. For, first of all, every law of God comes directly from him, whether in the form of an adaptation to nature, or in that of a positive statute. No law can have any adaptation or force, apart from the wisdom, goodness, and will of the Supreme Lawgiver. It is he, in both cases, who gives their obligations to all laws whatsoever which proceed from him; and hence we conclude, that what are called positive statutes are as fit and binding as what are called laws of nature can possibly be. Again, this law of the Sabbath, as it proceeds, with the other nine, from the same mind and will, and, as it were, in company with them, so it stands in their centre, on durable tables of stone, from which, by the Spirit of God, it and they are all equally to be transferred to the fleshly tables of the heart, and to the lives and conversations of men. And, lastly, it is found, by experience and observation in all ages, that when this command is disregarded, all the others are treated with much the same disrespect; and, on the other hand, when honoured and kept in obedience to the rest, that it is upheld and flourishes.

Again, it has been absurdly represented as merely a Jewish institution, not a permanent, universal law, and as beginning and ending with the national polity of that people. In reply to this, we have to say, that the assertion is contrary to the fact, and contradicted by the divine history. It did not begin with

the Jews, but was set up by the will and example of God in Paradise, and at the very institution of human society. It was known and recognised by the patriarchs, and by the people of Israel, before it was written on stone and given from Mount Sinai, and before that people received the scheme of their Polity, and the land in which it was to be established. It was observed and enjoined by Jesus Christ, along with the rest, as a part of his moral law to his Church and people throughout all generations, and after the Jews, for their unbelief, perished from off their land. True, it was a part both of the religious and civil polity and law of the Jews; but so also were the other nine, none of which, so far as we know, have, on that account, been viewed as confined entirely to that people. We may add to this, that if we have proved the truth of the title of the preceding treatise, the law of the Sabbath is adapted to all nations and times, no less than it was to the literal nation and times of Israel.

Again, it has been argued by many professing Christians, especially of the present day, that the Sabbath should form no part of the civil law of any land, and that the civil magistrate, as such, ought to have nothing to do with its administration, since it is a thing entirely spiritual, and since Christ's kingdom is not of this world. To this it may be answered, first, that by appointment of God, who ever doeth that which is right, the whole Decalogue formed a principal part of the civil law of the Jews,

and was under the administration of their magistrates; and next, that the law of the Sabbath is not so spiritual as not to be moral and temporal also. As to the kingdom of Christ, which is not of this world, its laws bind the world to receive its faith and to obey its King ; and they bind also lawgivers, rulers, and judges, to legislate, rule, and judge according to the will, and for the advancement of the glory, of the King in his kingdom. Christ, who is the Son of man, is Lord of the Sabbath; he was this from the beginning—was this in the times of Israel, and as such gave this law; and he will continue to be its Lord till the end of the world, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. His kingdom, which is not of this world, was unquestionably set up in the world immediately after the fall; and the Sabbath was one of its laws to all the people who owned his authority. It was he who made it a civil law—it was he who put it, so far as it belonged to the administration of judges, into their hands, and that at a time when he knew all in it that was spiritual and all that was temporal.

Lastly, it has been said that Christ has changed and even abolished this law, as if it had been all along a mere form, or ceremonial, or type. To which it is replied, that it had indeed a form, as all other laws have, but a form to reveal its substance; that its place in the Decalogue, and in the actual national polity, forbids the very idea of a ceremonial; and that its being a type of the rest that remaineth for

the people of God in heaven, no more affects its real moral character, than the fact, that marriage being typical or emblematical of the union between Christ and his Church, proves that there is nothing really substantial or moral in marriage itself—any more than Canaan's being a type of heaven, proves that the land of Canaan had no real independent existence, or that it was nothing more than a type. To argue, as some have done, for the abolition of the Sabbath, from the saying of Christ, that the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath, as if Christians were free from the law of it, and might do with the Sabbath what they pleased, and what they judged most fitting, is plainly futile and preposterous: for his words clearly signify, that the law was not enacted or made before man, independently of his existence, and seeking for some one to honour it; but that man being made, it was then given and enacted by the Creator of all things, for man's good, and for His own glory in man. The special good which it is the channel of communicating, ought surely to be determined by God, who, both in the law itself, and in the toil and misery of man's mortal life, makes manifest what is that good he intends to secure. Besides, what our Lord here affirms of this commandment, might with equal propriety be affirmed of the others. They are all made for man, and not man for them. They are all intended and fitted for man's good. They all, in their respective places, confer most precious benefits; and in the

keeping of every one of them there is a great reward. Their perfect kindness, so far from lessening, greatly enhances the obligation to keep them. The benefit they confer, coming through law and obedience, only makes it the more valuable and secure, since this circumstance renders it a duty to realize the good which it communicates. It is not possible, indeed, fully to enjoy a gift in opposition to the reason of it, or to the will of him who bestows it. For us to disobey the commandment, is evidently to forsake our own mercies, to despise the riches of God's goodness, and to incur his just displeasure. To break this commandment, and to teach men so, is to deserve to be called least in the kingdom of heaven. Undoubtedly, the Decalogue passed on from Moses to Christ incarnate, though it was given to Moses by Christ, and in his perfectly constituted and fully revealed kingdom, underwent certain modifications, as we may call them; yet these in no degree affected its nature, uses, or obligations. The law or rule of these modifications seems manifestly taught in one example, namely, the fifth commandment. As given by Moses, the servant of Christ, and acting for him, it stands thus: "Honour thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." (Exod. xx. 12.) It is republished under Christ thus: "Honour thy father and mother, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." (Eph. vi. 2, 3.) From the comparison, it is most evident that Christ

does no more than sanction, explain, and extend this law to all his professing people over all the earth. He neither changes nor abolishes it. He only hands it forward to his Church in clearer light, and with his express, loving, and loved authority.

THE END.



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